We'll Stay Forever This Way

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/42290700.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warnings:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings, Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Major Character Death
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Hannibal (TV), Adam (2009), Charlie Countryman (2013), Hannibal Extended Universe - Fandom, HEU - Fandom
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Nigel (Charlie Countryman)/Adam Raki
Characters:	Will Graham, Adam Raki, Hannibal Lecter, Nigel (Charlie Countryman), Beverly Katz, Bedelia Du Maurier, Jack Crawford
Additional Tags:	Inspired by Titanic (1997), Love at First Sight, Near Death Experiences, Mischa Lecter Lives, Past Child Abuse, Alternate Universe, RMS Titanic, Period-Typical Homophobia, Period Typical Attitudes, Canon Autistic Character, Hurt/Comfort, Angst, First Time, Adorable Adam Raki, Bad Bedelia
Language:	English
Collections:	BEST OF THE BEST
Stats:	Published: 2022-11-01 Completed: 2024-07-03 Words: 43,113 Chapters: 23/23

We'll Stay Forever This Way

by NotGonnaGetUs

Summary

Inspired by Titanic (1997)

Will and Adam Raki won their third class tickets on the Titanic in a game of poker, finally hoping their luck has changed as they head home to America.

Hannibal and Nigel Lecter are travelling first class, neither excited at what waits for them upon departure.

They never expect their paths to cross, or to fall in love.

Not with disaster ahead.

Chapter 1

1997

The house was quiet save for the blare of the tv in the kitchen, where an elderly woman sat at the counter, doing a crossword puzzle in the morning newspaper. Her hair was all white, a product of her age, and she still insisted on dressing elegantly, today in a long green dress.

The TV on the kitchen counter was playing a news programme, and the woman wasn't really listening to it, only using it as background noise, until she heard something of interest to her.

"Treasure hunter Brock Lovett is best known for finding Spanish Gold in sunken galleons in the Caribbean." Said the newsreader. "Now he is using deep submergence technology to work two and a half miles down at another wreck - The Titanic."

The woman looked up at the mention of the Titanic - it was of particular interest to her. She could remember the whole journey quite clearly, and was temporarily lost in her memories until she refocused her attention on the news report.

Brock Lovett was now on the screen, showing an artefact that his team had found on the Titanic. "What I'm interested in is the untold stories of the Titanic, the stories behind the artefacts we are recovering. Take a look at these drawings that we found just today - should these have remained at the bottom of the ocean for eternity?"

The news report continued, but the woman's attention was solely on the drawings they had shown on the screen.

One of the drawings was of a young girl, aged about 10, as she waved goodbye from the deck of the Titanic, dated 10th April, 1912, the day it set sail. Her hat had fallen off her head, and she was sitting on someone's shoulders, too small to see over the other people at the railing.

Another drawing showed two men, dancing together. The room and people around them were blurred, putting only the two men in focus, their smiles bright and free. A small note on the back showed the date and the occasion - 12th April, third class passengers party.

The final drawing showed another man, this one a simpler portrait, showing only his face in profile. He was smiling, looking fondly at whoever had drawn him. This man looked the same as one of the men in the previous drawing, but the woman knew better. There were subtle differences, in their expression, in everything.

Mr Lovett was talking again. "These drawings were found in a safe in the Lecter state room, signed with the initials H.L. However we have not been able to find any relatives of the Lecter family, nor any clue as to the identity of the people in the drawings." He went on to give out a phone number, for anyone to ring with information. They knew who had drawn them, passengers records from the Titanic had helped with that, but that didn't answer all of his questions.

The woman in the kitchen rang the phone number, hands shaking partly from age, partly from shock. After talking to a few people, she was put through to Brock Lovett, after explaining why she was ringing and who she was. For a few moments she doubted if she should ring - she was the only person alive who knew the history behind the drawings, maybe it should die with her. But it deserved to be told.

“Hello, who am I speaking with?” Mr Lovett asked. They had had tips coming in all day, from various people. He usually didn't bother talking to them directly, his time was too valuable for that. But someone had said he needed to talk to this person directly. He was intrigued.

The woman took a deep breath. “My name is Mischa Lecter - I am the little girl in the drawing.”

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

10th April, 1912

The crowds were enormous - mostly full of people there to see the Titanic set sail, but some of the crowds were passengers in the middle of embarking. She stood out against the skyline, her funnels standing tall and proud, people already gathering on the deck, ready to set sail. This was an event, plain and simple. The grandest ship in the world, proclaimed to be unsinkable, was due to sail from here, of course there would be huge crowds.

Stewards were organising the passengers, directing them where to go, checking their tickets, ensuring their luggage, and in some cases, their vehicles were on board. Some first class passengers had even brought their pets, others just had slightly ridiculous amounts of luggage. In contrast, many of the third class passengers had only one suitcase each, some had all their (few) earthly possessions.

A white, expensive looking car pulled up to the dock, parting the crowd slightly, with a few other cars trailing behind it. It was obvious that this car belonged to a first class passenger, from the pristine finish and the fact it was one of the newest models. The door opened, and out stepped Hannibal Lecter, dressed in a fine suit, holding his hand out to help his companion out of the vehicle.

His passenger was Bedelia Du Maurier, soon to be Bedelia Lecter, dressed elegantly, a wide brimmed hat shading her from the almost midday sun. She looked up at the Titanic, unimpressed. “I don’t see what the fuss is about, it doesn’t look any bigger than the Mauritania.” She removed her hand from Hannibal’s grasp, staring at the ship in front of her in almost boredom. This wasn't her first ship, wouldn't be the last. It was no different from any other.

Hannibal ignored her, turning his attention to the car behind them instead, which his twin, Nigel, and their younger sister Mischa had just stepped out of. Mischa was tall for her age, dressed in a sensible grey dress, black hair curled in ringlets around her shoulders. Nigel was dressed the same as his own twin, although his hair wasn’t as perfectly styled.

Mischa came running towards Hannibal, jumping straight into his arms. “Hanni!” She shouted, wrapping her small arms around his neck. “Is that our ship?” She asked, looking behind her brother to the Titanic with wide eyes. Hannibal held on to her tightly, a smile breaking out on his face. She had been excited about going on the Titanic for weeks, now.

Nigel followed Mischa, although he didn’t jump into his brother's arms. “How was the ride with Bedelia?” He asked, taking a drag of his cigarette and smirking. There was a reason he would rather ride with the 10 year old, and they both knew it. If he could avoid spending more time with Bedelia than necessary, he would.

“Yes, it’s our ship.” Hannibal replied to Mischa, sharing a knowing look with his twin as an answer to his question. Thankfully Bedelia was nowhere to be seen, having seemingly already boarded the ship before Nigel stepped out of the car. “Shall we board? Mr Crawford, can you take care of the luggage, please?”

Mr Crawford, Bedelia’s valet (because it was her family who was paying him) had exited the car just behind Nigel and Mischa, followed by Mischa’s nanny, Chiyoh. He nodded, turning to one of the White Star Line Stewards to tell him where the luggage, as well as the safe, was meant to go.

Chiyoh joined the siblings where they stood, her eyes on her charge. “Do you want me to take her, sir?” She was all too aware of Mr Crawford behind them, and knew they had to keep up appearances. To everyone else, she was simply Mischa’s nanny, but all 3 Lecter siblings knew she was part of the family, the fourth sibling so to speak. They were definitely not as formal in private.

Hannibal was still holding on to Mischa, so he carefully handed her over to Chiyoh, who was stronger than her small frame made her seem. “Be good for Chiyoh, okay?” He patted Mischa’s head fondly. “You go on ahead, we’ll be right behind.”

Nigel watched as Chiyoh boarded the Titanic, Mischa in her arms as they talked to each other. Chiyoh had been looking after Mischa almost since she was born - she was in good hands. He walked side by side with his twin as they followed, walking up the gangway. “I’m glad you got us a separate suite, I doubt I’d manage to share a suite with Bedelia for 5 days.”

Hannibal glanced at his twin. “You can thank Bedelia for that. Apparently it would be inappropriate for us to share a suite together, seeing as we aren’t married yet.” Not that he was complaining. He tolerated his fiancee, just about.

“If I ever thank Bedelia, you’ll know something’s wrong.” Nigel smiled as they boarded. They were now officially on board the Titanic, and leaving England behind them. “There are other options, not too late to back out” He needed another cigarette, but that would have to wait.

“There aren’t.” Hannibal said. They had been over this before, a million times at least. “Our marriage will provide some financial stability, for ourselves and for Mischa.” That was the important part. It wasn’t as if Bedelia didn’t know - she got things through this arrangement too.

Nigel huffed, he definitely needed a cigarette now. This was an old conversation, and no matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t get Hannibal to change his mind. Hopefully being stuck on a ship with Bedelia for five days would change his mind, he thought as they made their way to their suite.

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“I’m sorry, Adam.” Will Graham said, his poker cards in his hand. His twin, Adam sat next to him, having watched the poker game intently but not actually playing - his poker face was terrible, to say the least.

In the middle of the table sat the takings of the game - coins, a few cigarettes, a pen knife, and the main prize - 2 third class tickets for the Titanic. Will and Adam hadn't bet the tickets, but their opponents, Olaf and Sven had, much to the annoyance of Olaf.

This was the moment of truth - Olaf's hand was worthless, Sven had two pair. It was down to Will's hand, now.

Adam looked at his twin. Why was he sorry? Had he won, or not? Because he had bet all their remaining money, which was admittedly very little. Either they had won the tickets, and were heading home to America, or they had lost everything. "Did you lose our money?" He asked.

Will looked back at his hand - his poker face was impeccable, as always. He could feel Sven and Olaf's eyes on him, eagerly awaiting his cards. "I'm sorry, we won't be staying here much longer, because I've got a full house boys!" Will slammed his cards down on the table, grinning widely and revealing his poker hand.

Several things happened at once - Will jumped up and hugged Adam, tightly, both of them happy at the prospect of going home to America. Olaf and Sven started shouting at each other in Swedish, before Sven punched Olaf straight in the nose.

Will and Adam started packing up their things, including their winnings, and the Titanic tickets, before scarpering out of there, trying to avoid a fight, and trying to catch their path out of here, because the Titanic departed in five minutes.

Once they were outside, Will grabbed Adam's hand as they ran, weaving through the streets and the gathered crowds hoping to catch the ship before it left. This was their way out of here, their path to a new life. They could't miss it.

"Are we really doing this? They aren't our tickets." Adam shouted over the crowds, holding tightly to Will's hand. This was all rather sudden, and new to him, it was slightly overwhelming. The tickets didn't have their name on them - they wouldn't be able to use them, surely?

Will looked back at Adam, partly to make sure he was still there. "I won them, they're our tickets now. It'll be fine, Adam, I promise." He had won those tickets, they were damn sure gonna use them.

The twins had arrived at the gangway, it was just pulling away from the ship when they reached it, running up it and getting stopped by the steward closing the door.

"Wait! We're passengers!" Will shouted, showing the tickets to the steward, slightly out of breath from running there.

"Have you been through the inspection queue?" The steward asked, looking at the two of them, not needing to look at the ticket to know they were third class.

Will nodded. "Of course. Anyway we don't have any lice, we're Americans." Will gestured to Adam behind him, slightly breathless from running all the way here, willing Adam not to

say anything.

The steward looked at both of them, then nodded. “Alright, come aboard.”

Without a second of hesitation, Will jumped the small gap between the ship and the gangway, Adam following behind him. They ran through the hallways, Will leading the way, attempting to find their cabin.

“We’re the luckiest sons of bitches alive, you know that?” Will shouted. The hallways were busy, full of other third class passengers trying to find their own cabins.

Adam held tightly to Will’s hand, knowing he’d get lost if they separated. “If you say so.” He said quietly, not entirely sure they were lucky just to win the tickets. The poker game had been a game of chance, that’s all. No luck about it.

Eventually they reached the cabin, Will opening the door to discover it was only a two berth cabin, thankfully. Adam didn’t do well sharing spaces with strangers, and neither did Will, frankly.

Adam followed, carefully placing his bag onto the top bunk, knowing they wouldn’t be using it anyway - he and Will always slept in the same bed, a habit they couldn’t break by now.

Will followed suit, before pulling Adam in for a hug. “You okay?” He asked, kissing his forehead. He knew this would be an adjustment for Adam, who liked to have a routine and to know in advance what he was doing on any given day. In the space of one half hour poker game they had gone from being stuck in England with no money, to travelling back to America on the Titanic, the greatest ship in the world.

Adam nodded, hugging Will back tightly. “I will be.” He could adjust, he had to. At least they were together, that’s what mattered. Going back to America could be good for them, and they had never been on a ship like this before. The entire journey was hardly even a week long, he would be okay. They both would.

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Adam and Will spent the rest of their first day of the voyage on the third class deck, watching the various passengers milling around, seeing the expanse of the ocean before them.

Adam had been quiet, mostly, content just to sit for a little bit. He sat next to Will on one of the benches, in his own little world. He looked up at the sky, wondering what the view would be like at night.

Will, on the other hand, was already making friends with other third class passengers. He watched as a steward walked a couple of dogs past where they were sitting, obviously from first class.

“Typical, first class dogs come down here to take a shit.” One of the men sat next to Will said, taking a drag of his cigarette.

“It lets us know where we rank in the scheme of things.” Will laughed, looking at the man. “I’m Will.” He introduced himself, remembering his manners.

The man shook his offered hand. “Brian, that’s Jimmy.” He nodded to the guy standing overlooking the railing. “Your friend seems kinda quiet.” He gestured to Adam.

Will looked at his brother, nudging him gently. “You okay?” He whispered. When Adam nodded, he turned back to Brian. “Adam, he’s my brother. He’s slightly shy.” Shy wasn’t the right word, but Will didn’t know how else to describe his brother. He could be awkward around people, especially in new situations, and liked to be left alone a lot of the time, so ‘shy’ seemed like the best description.

Brian kept talking, but Will found his gaze wandering upwards, to where the first class deck was. It was higher than theirs, overlooking the rest of the ship. Everyone was well dressed, in smart suits and uncomfortable looking dresses. They looked happy, content with their place in the world, at the top of society.

Except for one gentleman, dressed in a well tailored suit, leaning against the railing. Will could see he was handsome, his hair slightly long but perfectly styled. He didn’t look happy, as he looked out across the ship. There was a woman by his side, looking utterly bored. But Will couldn’t keep his eyes off the man, there was something about him. The man was on top of the world, almost literally, and yet he looked like he would rather be anywhere else but there.

Ever since he was a child, Will had been able to connect with people, in a way. He could know how others were feeling, sometimes what they were thinking, as if they were his own thoughts and feelings. A stark contrast to Adam, who had trouble understanding other people and their meanings. Their mother joked that Will had gotten all of Adam's empathy in the womb.

Brian noticed where Will was looking, up to the first class deck, and drew the wrong conclusion. “Forget it, Will. You’ve got no chance with the likes of her.” He had thought that Will was looking at the woman, who was pretty, at least.

Will shook his head, letting Brian think it was the woman. He had just thought the man interesting, anyway. Will looked away, just missing when the man glanced towards him. Will didn’t even know what had made him interested in the man, really. He couldn't explain it. It didn't matter - Adam was all he needed.

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Dinner in the first class dining room was an affair on the Titanic, as always. Everyone was dressed up to the nines, with the finest foods and the finest wines the White Star Line had to offer. Music played as the passengers ate, and it was considered a great honour to dine with the Captain.

It was the first night of the voyage, so the plates had never been used. No one had sat here before, it was all brand new. A chance to brag, once they disembarked, how they were the first passengers of this great ship.

Hannibal didn't care. He could see the other passengers, looking at the men, how they interacted with their wives. Is this what lay in store for him? He could hear the mindless chatter, about the stock markets, or the news, and watched as the men smiled without love at their wives. He watched as one man even ordered the food for his companion, probably fiancé, seeing as there was no wedding ring. The men clapped themselves on the back, no meaning to their words whatsoever. They only cared about themselves, their money, their status. They weren't in love.

There was one exception to that, Hannibal could concede, when it came to first class marriage and love. And that was Beverely Katz and her husband. They were new money, as Bedelia called them - their wealth wasn't a result of their family, but of themselves. They were happy, and so unlike every other first class passenger it was a breath of fresh air to their table. They were genuinely in love, their smiles were real, even if Mr Katz could be mysterious at times, dodging questions.

Hannibal looked around their table, wondering if that was his fate. Stuck in a loveless marriage, forever talking about money, never feeling fulfilled. Their table was full - Bedelia, Nigel, Mischa, Beverley and her husband, a few other first class passengers. It didn't feel right. The conversation was shallow, unfulfilling. He could play his role, be the dutiful husband if it meant that Mischa could grow up with some stability. If it gave his siblings freedom, he could give up his.

It was after the dinner, when Hannibal and Nigel were walking along the deck in the dark night, sharing a cigarette when Hannibal finally felt free. Free from Bedelia, at least. He never felt better than when he was with his siblings, the way it had been for years. He had taken care of them, and marrying Bedelia was another form of that.

The brothers didn't say anything, not needing to, as they reached the back of the ship. They just leaned against the railing, smoking and looking out at the stars. This was the start of their new life, for better or for worse. After this, Hannibal would be married, Mischa would have some stability, and Nigel could do whatever he wanted. Their small bubble would burst.

They weren't alone on the deck - Adam and Will stood at the far railing, at the very back of the ship, also in a friendly silence. They had been out for a while, Adam wanting to look at the stars, Will happy just to be with Adam. They stood side by side, shoulders touching, not needing to say anything.

Will heard footsteps, glancing behind him to surprisingly see the man from first class who had caught his eye. "Back in a minute." He nudged Adam, before pushing off the railing and walking up to the two gentlemen. "Mind if I borrow a smoke?" He asked.

Nigel glanced at him, lighting a cigarette before handing it to the boy. "Sure. I won't need it back, though." He smiled - the boy was cute, if young looking. Nigel liked cute. He glanced to the other boy, who stood by the railing, looking out to the stars. Odd, to be out this late at night, but then again he was as well.

"Thanks." Will took a drag of the cigarette, inhaling deeply. God it felt good. You couldn't beat a cigarette on a night like this. Adam hated cigarettes, and barely tolerated the smell, so Will stayed where was, leaning on the railing. Adam was okay on his own.

Hannibal couldn’t help but look at the boy, noticed his wind ruffled hair, just past his ears, his eyes, his demeanour. Something about this boy intrigued him. He didn’t know of many people who would casually walk up to Nigel and ask for a cigarette. Or who would be out at nearly midnight looking at the stars in the middle of the ocean.

Adam stayed by the railing, lost in the stars. It was slightly windy, and his coat didn't do much to ward off the chill. But it didn't matter. The stars looked different from the middle of the ocean.

They stayed like that for a few moments, Will standing with Hannibal and Nigel, just enjoying their cigarettes, a small bit of warmth on a cold night. The night was calm, after all the excitement of the ship setting sail. A stark contrast to just hours earlier when the ship was alive with music and people. Now it seemed like no one else existed, except these four men.

The silence of the night was broken by a scream and a shout of “Will!” as Adam fell over the railing.

Chapter End Notes

I'm on twitter @libraryperson6 :)

Chapter 3

Adam wasn't sure what had happened, he had been standing on the bottom rung of the railing, looking over the edge at the sea, and then suddenly, he slipped and went over the edge. He managed to grab the railing on instinct, as he shouted for Will, but he knew he wouldn't be able to pull himself over.

Time seemed to slow down for Adam. He could hear the sea beneath him, could feel the wind, how cold it was. If he slipped, if he fell, he would be dead. The temperature of the water would kill him first, if the impact didn't. He could feel his grip slipping, as tears formed in his eyes, terror taking hold in his mind.

On deck, Will felt similarly as he rushed to the railing, fearing the worst. He couldn't lose Adam, not after everything. "Adam!" He shouted, looking over the railing to see his brother, terrified but managing to hold on to the railing.

Hannibal and Nigel didn't hesitate to follow Will, rushing to the railing behind him, wanting to help.

Will took a hold of one of Adam's arms, as Nigel took the other, Hannibal reaching over to grab the collar of Adam's shirt, hoping it would help. Together, they pulled Adam up and over the railing, to safety. Adam, Will and Nigel landed on their backs on the deck.

Adam accidentally landed on top of Nigel, both of them landing on the deck with a loud thump. "Sorry, I-" Adam's heart was still racing, he felt like he couldn't breathe, wheezing slightly.

Nigel had his arms around the boy laid on top of him, and rubbed his hand down his back. "Calm down, gorgeous, you're safe." He resisted the urge to kiss him on the forehead like he would Mischa, realising that would be a bit too much.

Will had landed on his back, the momentum from pulling Adam over being a bit too much to handle, but at least Adam was safe. A hand appeared in front of him, and Will took it, and found he was being pulled up by the other first class twin. "Thanks." He knelt down next to where Nigel and Adam were still laying.

"I think he's hyperventilating." Nigel said, looking from the boy in his arms to the twin next to him, not able to move with the weight on top of him. The boy was shivering, breathing heavily.

Will placed a gentle hand on Adam's back, whispering tenderly to him. "Adam, you're safe. Remember your breathing, in for 3, hold for 3, out for 3." Will exaggerated his own breathing to help, a tried and tested method for when Adam got like this.

Steadily, Adam felt like he could breathe normally again. He looked down, realised that he was lying on somebody, a handsome somebody, and scrambled to get to his feet. "Sorry."

Hannibal had watched the scene curiously, slightly entranced by the two boys in front of him, as Nigel struggled to his feet, smoothing down his suit as he did so.

Will had pulled Adam into a tight hug. “Don’t do that to me, please.” To Hannibal and Nigel he was grateful. “Thank you for helping, I can’t thank you enough.” He knew he wouldn’t be able to pull Adam over by himself, so the help was appreciated.

“It was nothing.” Nigel shrugged, like he saved people from certain death every day. “Is he gonna be okay?” He nodded towards Adam, who hadn’t moved from Will’s arms.

Will nodded. “He’ll be fine. I’m Will, by the way. This is Adam.” He wasn’t going to let go of him anytime soon, his heart still racing. If Adam had slipped…

It didn't bear thinking about.

Nigel reached in his pocket for another cigarette, having thrown his own away when he ran to help the boy. “Nigel, this is Hannibal.”

“I might have to get you to write that one down.” Will smiled. Now they had names, at least. Even if Hannibal was a new one on him.

Adam turned slightly, still encircled in Will’s arms, to look at his saviours.They were twins, like him and Will, he realised. “Thank you.” He whispered.

“No problem, gorgeous.” Nigel winked, he couldn’t help himself. Whilst he thought Will was cute, Adam was adorable. Especially when he blushed, like right now. He looked around the deck, realising it was empty aside from them. No one had come running when Adam shouted. “I thought a steward would have come at the shouting.” He remarked.

Will looked around the deck. There was no one else. “It’s midnight, and Adam’s kind of quiet.” If it had been a woman, no doubt someone else would have come to help. But they were men, and third class on top of that. No one would come to help. “We should go. I really can’t thank you enough.”

Hannibal had been mostly silent, instead choosing to watch the boys in front of him. How tightly Will held on to Adam, how close they seemed to be. They reminded him a lot of himself and Nigel, in some ways. He knew if they left now, they would never see each other again. He couldn’t have that. “Have dinner with us tomorrow night, your company will be thanks enough.” The words were out of his mouth before he thought it through properly.

Will laughed gently. “We’re third class, they wouldn’t even let us in the dining room.” God knows their clothes weren’t nice enough to pass as first class passengers. Will remembered his manners. “Thank you, though.” He also knew Adam wouldn't enjoy it, at all.

Nigel, as always, knew what Hannibal was thinking. They both knew of each other's interests, there were no secrets between them. “Can we at least see you tomorrow? Go on a walk around the first class deck, make sure he’s doing okay.” He nodded at Adam, who was looking right at him, although avoiding eye contact.

Adam could feel Nigel's gaze on him, could feel the heat of it. The man had called him gorgeous, hadn't he? Adam wanted to see him again, he knew that much. He nodded, a signal Will would understand.

Will felt rather than saw Adam's nod, as he was still watching Hannibal. A walk could be okay. "Okay."

They agreed on a place and time to meet, and both sets of twins retreated to their respective cabins to reflect on the nights events.

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Will and Adam went back to their cabin, and laid down in the bottom bunk, arms around each other. They had always slept this way, ever since they were kids. It had started as being easier, to just share a bed, but it had grown into a reassurance, waking up to find the other still there in the morning. Even when the bed wasn't quite big enough, like now.

Will laid on his back, Adam tucked into his side. "You okay? It's been a long day." Funny to think that just that morning, they were still in England, still unsure about their future. Now they were on their way back home.

Adam nodded. He hadn't spoken since they got back. "I'm always okay when you're here." It was true. It was scary, how fast everything had happened today, but Will was there, always had been. Always would be."He called me gorgeous."

A quick turn of the conversation, but Will could always follow where Adam's train of thought led him. "Nigel did, yeah. He couldn't take his eyes off you." Will had noticed, and wondered if Adam realised. "We don't have to see them tomorrow, y'know."

"We said we would, if we don't then we lied." Adam didn't need to explain further. "I want to see them again." He wanted to see Nigel again, really. Adam could remember how he felt underneath him. Warm and solid, it felt good. And Nigel had called him gorgeous, he couldn't stop replaying it in his head.

Will kissed the top of Adam's forehead, thinking. "Okay. Let's sleep, it's been a long day." Truthfully, Will also wanted to see them again. Hannibal seemed interesting, at the very least.

Their sleep was restless, as usual. Adam could normally sleep like the dead, once he was asleep that was it, he was gone. But not tonight. The third class cabins were in the bowels of the ship, close to the engines. And that meant they were noisy, loud sometimes. Adam wasn't used to it.

Will slept in fits and starts, as he usually did. Sleep had never come easy to him, especially not now it was just him and Adam, and when he did sleep it was full of nightmares and night sweats. He often found himself just listening to Adam's breathing, most nights.

They both slept restlessly, the environment unfamiliar to both of them, although they eventually dozed off, curled up together.

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Hannibal and Nigel walked back to their cabin in silence, side by side, both lost in their individual thoughts.

Hannibal couldn't get Will out of his mind, the glint in his eyes, the hair that had blown gently in the breeze on deck. How Will had raced to his twin, the fear evident in his voice. How Will hung on so tightly to Adam, arms wrapped around him in an open display of affection. It was rare to see 2 brothers so openly affectionate with each other, at least in Hannibal's mind. Will obviously valued his family very much.

Nigel's thoughts were a bit more vain than Hannibal's. All he could think of was Adam's face, those expressive eyes that had never quite met his own. The feel of the boy on top of him, how Nigel just wanted to roll them over, regardless of their audience, and find out how Adam tasted.

They both reached their cabin, quietly opening the door so as not to disturb Chiyoh and Mischa, who were fast asleep curled up in Chiyoh's bed together.

Hannibal undressed and went straight to bed, pulling the covers up as he fell asleep to thoughts of Will.

Nigel took a detour to the washbasin, splashing his face with cold water in an attempt to cool himself off before he slipped under the covers and fell asleep quickly, eager for tomorrow to come.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Content warning for slight description of child abuse - very briefly described.

The following afternoon, Adam and Will strayed on deck, not wanting to be confined to their cabin for the entire voyage, and because they would be meeting Hannibal and Nigel soon. They sat side by side, watching some of the third class children play on deck, like they hadn't a care in the world. At that age, they didn't.

Will looked at Adam, thinking back to last night. He'd come close to losing him, too close. In all their years of making it on their own, Will had been proud that they had survived it, that he'd kept his promise to himself and kept him safe. He'd nearly failed last night.

It didn't seem to bother Adam, the near death experience. It was almost as if it hadn't happened. In his mind, it had happened, but he didn't need to dwell on it. He was here, he had Will, that's what mattered. End of. Thinking back on it didn't change anything.

There was a small commotion on the third class deck, when pretty much everyone's head turned to the stairwell that separated the third class deck from the first class deck. Nigel walked down it, stepping over the small chain that meant 'do not cross.'

He strode over to where Adam and Will sat, extending his hand out politely. He was dressed in another well-tailored suit, setting him a world apart from the male third class passengers. "Care to join me in first class?" He was asking both of the twins, but his gaze was fixed on Adam entirely.

Adam looked at Nigel, taking in the suit, avoiding his eyes. He could still remember the feel of Nigel underneath him, making his blush slightly. He nodded, looking at Will.

Will could feel everyone's eyes on him, as if this were a free show. Then he stood, bypassing Nigel's hand so Adam could take it. "Lead the way." This was intimidating. They had arranged this meeting beforehand, so this wasn't a surprise, but part of him thought it wouldn't happen. Why would Hannibal and Nigel want to see him and Adam again? Was this simply a curiosity, see how the poorest passengers on the ship lived?

There was only one way to find out.

Adam took Nigel's offered hand, out of politeness and curiosity, letting go as soon as he possibly could. They didn't need anyone staring.

Nigel led them to the stairwell, letting them ascend ahead of him.

“If I’d known it was this easy to get up here I would have done it yesterday.” Will joked as they reached the top. All that separated the 2 decks was a stairwell and a chain. If only it were that easy.

Hannibal stood by the railing of the ship, Mischa on his his as they looked out over the vast ocean. He was talking to her quietly, in another language, Mischa hanging on his every word. He turned to spot Will and Adam. “Mischa, I have some friends I’d like you to meet.” He had switched to English, now.

Will’s stomach flipped at the word friends. Is that what they were? It seemed…fast, considering they met last night and had barely spoken. Maybe it was just an easy way to explain it to the girl, who was looking at them with wide eyes.

“This is our little sister, Mischa. Mischa, this is Will and Adam.” Hannibal gently lowered his sister to the deck, setting her on her feet, as Nigel joined them.

Mischa stepped forward, dressed in a pretty green dress with a matching bow. “Nice to meet you.”

Adam waved, never entirely sure how to act around kids, smiling politely.

Will smiled. “Nice to meet you too, Mischa.” She looked a lot like her brothers, Will realised. Dark hair that looked more blonde in the sunlight, a pretty face (yes that went for Hannibal and Nigel too) with very expressive eyes that saw everything.

Mischa turned to her brothers, who were both watching her attentively. “Can I go and play with Chiyoh?” Her eyes wandered to where Chiyoh was standing, a few feet away looking out over the ocean, contemplating.

Hannibal nodded wordlessly, and she skipped away, heading straight towards Chiyoh who gathered her up in a big hug.

Hannibal and Nigel both turned their attention to Will and Adam, who were still stood before them slightly awkwardly.

Adam could feel Nigel’s eyes on him, intensely. He wondered what was going to happen now, and if Nigel would call him gorgeous again. He hoped so.

“Care to take a walk around the deck, Adam?” Nigel asked, holding one arm out like a gentleman.

Adam looked to Will, who nodded even though Adam did not need permission to do anything. “That sounds nice.” Adam stepped forward, hesitantly taking Nigel’s arm, and then walked off, leaving Hannibal and Will alone.

Will walked up to the railing, still curious what was going to happen here. Yes, the Lecter twins had saved Adam’s life last night, but why would that warrant any kind of friendship? And include meeting their little sister? It was obvious that Nigel had taken a shine to Adam, but for what purposes?

Will decided to cut to the chase. “Why did you want to see us again?” He asked, looking out over the ocean where he leaned against the railing. The view was the same as from third class, so at least some things didn’t change on the more expensive part of the ship.

Hannibal looked at him. “We wanted to make sure Adam was okay after last night. He seemed pretty shaken up.” It was the polite thing to do, to follow up after saving someone’s life, wasn’t it? “You both did.”

“That can’t be it.” Will laughed gently. He wasn’t stupid, he knew what rich , first class men usually wanted with boys like himself and Adam. Especially Adam. He had kept them safe this entire time, he wasn’t going to let his guard down now. Maybe he shouldn’t have let Adam go off with Nigel. But that was a passing thought. Men like that didn't act like this.

Hannibal carefully placed his hand on top of Will’s on the railing, causing the boy to look at him. “It’s the truth, Will. I have no other motives or hidden agenda. Nigel was worried about Adam, too.” He could see it in his twins eyes, how he thought of Adam.

Will looked at where their hands met. It had been just himself and Adam for so long, alone in their own little world, he hadn’t thought others might actually care. “Thank you.” He remembered his manners. “Adam and I have been on our own for so long, I’ve become wary of older men taking an interest.”

“I think there’s less of an age difference that you realise, Will.” Hannibal still smiled, even at the thought of being old. He was young, but life had aged him and Nigel both, unfortunately. “I’m 21.”

Will had meant the ‘older men’ bit as a small joke, but Hannibal was younger than he had actually thought. “You look older.” The suits didn’t help, and the odd strands of grey hair that Will noticed. “I’m 18.” 3 years between them, almost nothing.

“You look younger.” Hannibal could see how Will’s clothes hung off his frame slightly, how they didn’t fit at all. How skinny he was, how small he seemed. They were the same height, but Hannibal felt taller next to Will, somehow. “How did you come to be on Titanic, Will?”

A welcome change in conversation. “I won our tickets in a poker game yesterday morning. We grabbed everything we had and ran to the dock, just boarding in time.” It had been exhilarating at the time, but it was a risk, he realised now.

Hannibal stared at him, fully realising just how different they really were. Will and Adam were here by sheer dumb luck - for the Lecters, this journey had been planned for months, paid for in advance and down to every detail. Moving to another country had taken a lot of thought and late night discussions. For Adam and Will, it had been a whim. "Do you not have any family?” Everything Will said just made him want to know more.

“Just me and Adam.” Will sighed, glancing over at his companion. “Mom died when we were born, and our dad was a drunk.” He hadn’t actually told anyone this before - there had never been anyone to tell.

Hannibal looked at him with sadness in his eyes. “You ran away?”

Will nodded, thought for a moment, then spoke. “Dad was a mean drunk, always throwing things, hitting us. One day when we were 12, I came home to find him choking Adam. Called him useless, said how weird he was, why couldn’t he be normal. I hit dad over the head with a poker from the fire, and we ran away. Been alone ever since.” Will shrugged, as if it was nothing to leave everything behind at 12.

Hannibal was almost in shock at how passively Will had described the abuse, so nonchalantly. No wonder Will was so protective of Adam, he thought. He couldn’t think of anything to say in response - apologies were pointless.

“Your turn.” It was surprisingly easy to talk to Hannibal, Will thought. It was natural.

Hannibal shook his head gently, looking out over the railing. “It’s just me, Nigel, Mischa and Chiyoh. Our Uncle Robertus lives in New York. I’m travelling with my fiancé, Bedelia.” A small grimace as he remembered what awaited him at the end of this journey.

Will would later deny that his heart dropped at the mention of a fiancé, because he hadn’t been hoping for anything. Hannibal was a grown man, rich, on top of the world, of course he was engaged. “You don’t sound happy about it.” Will noted, steadfastly not looking at Hannibal.

“It is merely a business arrangement, nothing more.” If Hannibal got married, he could inherit what remained of their father’s estate. Mischa could go to a good school, and Nigel could be Nigel.

“You don’t love her, then?” Will turned, putting his back against the railing and glancing over at Hannibal. Marriage as a business arrangement was strange to him.

Hannibal copied the movement, shaking his head. “My proclivities prevent me from doing that.” Even if he was that way inclined, Bedelia would never have known Hannibal's love. He wondered if he had revealed too much, but didn't care.

Proclivities? What the hell did that mean? Oh. *Oh.* Will realised, but was prevented from saying anything further from Micha running up to them, paper in hand. Great timing.

“Han, I drew a picture for your new friends.” She held out the piece of paper proudly, as Chiyoh caught up to her, breathless.

“You can’t keep running off like that. I can’t keep up.” Chiyoh admonished, but she was smiling anyway, looking at her charge fondly.

Hannibal took the drawing, showing it to Will.

Will had expected a childish drawing, really. Bright colours and crayons, maybe. What he found was much more artistic - a drawing of the Titanic, well proportioned and drawn, carefully shaded, and accurate. It was brilliant. “Woah.” He said, not sure what else he could say.

“This is brilliant, Mischa.” Hannibal passed the drawing to Will, picking Mischa up to rest on his hip and smiling.

Mischa looked at Will, slightly timid. “You can keep it. Where’s Adam?”

Will just blinked at her. They had only just met a short while ago, and Mischa remembered their names *and* could tell them apart? “Walking with Nigel. Thank you for the drawing, Adam will love it.” He wondered how Adam was faring with Nigel, on their walk together. He wasn’t sure how long it had been, but he hoped they’d be back soon.

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Adam and Nigel walked in silence for a short while, eventually reaching the end of the ship, thankfully the opposite end to where Adam had slipped last night.

“Thank you for last night.” Adam said quietly, wanting to fill the silence. He quickly glanced at Nigel, who he knew was watching him.

“You’re very welcome, gorgeous.” Nigel was itching for a cigarette, as per usual, but he got the feeling Adam wouldn’t like it. There weren’t many people around this part of the ship, leaving him and Adam almost alone together.

Adam frowned at the compliment, even though it also made him blush slightly. “Why do you keep calling me that?” He stood with his arms wrapped around himself, his thin and slightly ragged shirt not much protection against the breeze. “You called me gorgeous last night, and then again just now.”

Nigel stepped closer to Adam, almost putting a hand on his shoulder before thinking better of it. “Because you are.” Because Adam was the most gorgeous person he’d ever seen, and he’d never had much of a filter.

Adam blushed again. “Thank you. I think you’re handsome, too.” He turned to look at Nigel, properly, surprised to find just how close he was standing. They were not quite the same height, Nigel looming over him slightly, causing Adam to look up at him.

“You look cold.” Nigel noticed, shrugging off his suit jacket, placing it around Adam’s shoulders. It looked huge on him, but in a cute way. “Shall we make our way back?”

Adam nodded, pulling Nigel’s jacket around him tightly. It smelled faintly of cigarette smoke, and gave him a headache, but he didn’t mind. It smelled like Nigel.

They walked together, side by side, a bit closer than last time, back down the deck to where Hannibal and Will stood, with Mischa and Chiyoh. Another person had joined their group - Beverly Katz.

“You should join us for dinner, liven up the place a bit.” Beverly was saying, her hand on Will’s arm. She turned, spotted Adam and Nigel coming up to them. She noticed Nigel’s jacket around the boy, knew exactly what was going on, and immediately wanted to know more. “You must be Adam.”

“Adam, this is Beverley Katz, a good friend.” Hannibal introduced her, Mischa falling asleep in his arms. He kissed her forehead, gently.

Adam nodded politely, moving to stand next to his twin, still wearing Nigel’s jacket. Dinner? That didn’t sound fun.

“We don’t want to intrude, Miss Katz.” Will declined the offer politely, leaning against the railing. Adam would not do well, he feared. Neither would he, surrounded by rich, posh and stuck up passengers. Present company excluded, of course.

“Nonsense, we insist.” Nigel had caught on, though whether this was Hannibal's idea or Beverly’s, he had no idea. Plus, if Bedelia joined them, it would annoy her greatly, which was a win in his book.

Will and Adam looked at each other, a silent conversation happening between them in the blink of an eye. Will didn’t want to be rude, and Adam liked Nigel. They could leave if they had to, and the food was bound to be better than they’d had in weeks, maybe months. It was one night. Adam nodded, almost imperceptibly.

“I doubt our clothes are suitable for first class.” Will laughed, looking down at himself. They would stick out like a sore thumb. And not just because of the clothes.

“I think my husband’s suits might fit you, I'm sure we can find something suitable for dinner.” Beverly said, a twinkle in her eye.

Mischa stirred in Hannibal’s arms. “Dinner? Are Will and Adam joining us?” She mumbled into Hannibal’s shoulder. She seemed to have taken a shine to the boys.

“They are, little one.” Nigel said, coming to stand next to his brother, stroking his sister's hair gently. Now they had to join, lest they disappoint Mischa.

“Yay.” Mischa said, quietly. She was tired, and had missed her afternoon nap to draw the picture for Will and Adam.

It was settled. Will and Adam would be dining first class on the Titanic tonight.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

In the Lecter stateroom, Mischa was finishing brushing her hair, legs dangling where she sat on the stool in front of the vanity. She had to sit on a cushion to see properly, but she insisted on doing her hair herself. She had changed into a different dress, as standard for first class dining, a dark blue dress that made her feel grown up. “Why does Bev have to help Will and Adam with their clothes?” She asked, feet swinging.

“Because they thought their clothes weren’t nice enough for first class.” Nigel answered, tying his tie. Mischa wasn’t quite aware of class differences just yet, and that was the easiest way to explain it. “Your hair looks fine, sweetheart.”

Mischa frowned as Nigel took the hairbrush out of her hand, placing a kiss on her head. “Who will be at dinner?” She asked, meeting her brother’s eyes in the mirror.

“Us, Han, Bedelia, Beverley, Will and Adam.” Chiyoh preferred to eat on her own, also knowing that Bedelia thought it inappropriate for the nanny to eat with them. Beverley’s husband was apparently ill, not used to being at sea, and would not be joining them.

Mischa nodded, as if giving her approval, before picking up her hairbrush again. Nigel had messed it up slightly.

The door opened, Hannibal entering the room. He didn’t look happy. The reason why had followed him in.

“You invited 2 strangers from third class to dine with us? What will the other passengers think, Hannibal?” Bedelia walked into the room behind him, wearing a stylish dark green dress that screamed *I have money* . She sounded aghast at the news of Will and Adam joining them.

“They aren’t strangers. We saved Adam’s life last night, and thought it would be nice to invite them for dinner.” Hannibal explained, patiently. He looked to his twin, trying to stay polite, hoping for some help.

“You are welcome to sit at another table, Bedelia.” Nigel suggested, hiding a smirk with Mischa in the mirror. Neither of them liked Bedelia, and didn’t really hide it very well.

“I’m happy Will and Adam are joining us.” Mischa said, finally putting her hairbrush away for good, satisfied.

Nigel kissed her on the head, as if to say thank you.

Bedelia ignored her.

Together, the four of them left the room, Bedelia on Hannibal's arm and Mischa holding hands with Nigel, making their way to the first class dining room.

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"You look wonderful, boys!" Beverly clasped her hands together, looking at Will and Adam in their new suits. Adam's was slightly big, but it worked. "Now you can pass as first class passengers." She had a twinkle in her eye.

Adam looked in the mirror at himself. The suit was nice, but he didn't like how it felt on him. The collar was scratchy, the tie was constricting, and it didn't feel right. He wasn't used to this type of clothing.

Will was fine with his suit, on the other hand. He stood next to Adam, looking at the two of them. The suits made them look more grown up, he realised. Or maybe they were growing up, he had to remind himself they weren't 12 anymore. "They look amazing, thank you Miss Katz." To Adam, he whispered. "We don't have to do this if you don't want to."

Adam shook his head, knowing Will would understand. They had agreed to dinner, so they would go to dinner. Adam would be fine.

Beverly waved off the formalities. "Call me Bev, please. Now, care to escort a lady to dinner?"

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Beverly entered the first class dining room with Will and Adam either side of her, proud to be escorted by two fine young men such as the twins.

Adam already felt slightly overwhelmed, and he had only just walked in. He could hear the music, focussed on it to help stay calm. When he was a kid Will would sing to him when he got overwhelmed, to help calm him down. The same idea worked now.

Will was busy trying not to stare at everything around him. It was all so much nicer in first class, from the décor to the tables, the live music from a paid band. It was a world away from third class, yet only a few decks above it. It all looked so elegant, so rich.

Beverley showed them the way to the table, pointing out a few of the guests on the way - the richest man on the ship; the man travelling with his much younger and pregnant wife; the designer, Mr Andrews.

Their table was obvious enough - Hannibal, Nigel and Mischa were already seated. It was a large table, circular so there was nowhere to hide. A stark difference from third class, as always, where the tables were long and seated multiple groups. First class passengers could dine in their own social bubbles, as it were.

Adam couldn't help but blush when he noticed Nigel watching him as he took his seat, focussing on sitting down to avoid being overwhelmed. Thankfully, Will took the seat next to him, Beverly the other side.

Nigel sat beside Beverly, followed by Mischa and then Hannibal, leaving Bedelia in between her fiance and Will. Introductions were made, Mischa smiling brightly at their new friends.

Will noticed when Bedelia very slightly moved her chair closer to Hannibal. “It was nice of you to invite us, Hannibal.” He said, nodding politely. He already didn’t like Bedelia.

The food started to be served, both Adam and Will thoroughly confused by the cutlery before them, which consisted of several different spoons, forks and plates. Why did they need four spoons for one meal?

“Start on the outside and work your way in.” Beverley whispered to them, seeing the confusion on their faces, smiling when they got it right.

The meal was awkward, there was no other way to describe it. Bedelia remained silent and stony faced, as if in protest of being sat next to a third class passenger.

Beverly and Nigel were the most talkative, telling light hearted stories to fill the silence, the way they did every night. They occasionally spoke of the news, but never of business, and it was also Mischa-appropriate.

Adam focussed on his food, using all his concentration to get through it. He didn’t like the food, some of it didn’t feel right, and he completely ignored the caviar. He could tell he wouldn’t like it just by looking at it. He could feel when Nigel kept looking at him, stealing his own glances in return.

Will listened to the stories, laughing at the appropriate times. Beverly was wonderful at telling stories, so enthusiastic it was almost infectious. A stark contrast to Bedelia next to him, who was basically a statue, she was so cold. Will steadfastly kept his attention away from Hannibal - seeing as his fiance was in between them, it seemed like the best idea.

Mischa remained quiet, far from the bubbly and adorable girl she had been on deck. She kept glancing at Adam, watching how he ate his food, although he didn’t notice.

Hannibal was also quiet, noting how quiet his sister was. This was not going as planned. He had hoped to extend an olive branch to Adam and Will, unwilling to let them go just yet. And he was usually bored at these dinners, he hoped fresh company would liven it up. But the atmosphere was stilted, instead. If Bedelia hadn’t been there, it would have been better, he realised.

Adam realised his mind had wandered, too busy thinking how loud it was in here, with the music, the chatter and the scrape of cutlery. He made an effort to return to the present, listening to Bev tell the end of her story.

“My husband had no idea I’d hidden the money in the stove.” Bev was saying, jovial and perhaps slightly tipsy from the champagne. “So he comes home, drunk as a pig after celebrating and he lights a fire!” She was laughing as she said it, causing the rest of the table to laugh, even Bedelia.

Adam wasn’t laughing - how could that be funny? He saw Will was smiling at the story, but it was his fake, polite smile. With how they'd both grown up, how could they ever find burning money funny?

“Your new friends don’t seem to have a sense of humour, Hannibal.” Bedelia leaned over to her fiance, intending to whisper but talking louder than she realised.

Adam heard it, as did Will and the entire table.

“I don’t see how burning a substantial amount of money can be funny.” Adam said, speaking up for the first time since they had sat down. He felt Will’s hand on his leg, to help steady him.

Bedelia took another sip of her wine. “So, how do you two have the means to travel?” It was obvious they didn’t have money, just from looking at them.

“We won our tickets in a lucky hand of poker.” Will said, putting his knife down lest he be tempted to do something with it. How Hannibal could be engaged to this woman he didn’t know.

“A lucky hand indeed.” Nigel said, raising his glass and winking at Adam, who smiled for the first time that night.

Bev toasted him in agreement. “Remind me not to play poker with you, Will.” She smiled, trying to ease the tension of the table.

Bedelia took another sip of her wine, the alcohol invigorating her. “You couldn’t even afford the third class tickets, then?”

Hannibal grabbed the wine glass out of her hand, having finally had enough. He knew Will could handle himself, but he couldn’t take it anymore. “Let’s not speak of money at the table, Bedelia. It is impolite.” He exchanged a glance with Nigel, neither of them needing to speak.

The rest of the table was talking again, but the atmosphere was tense.

Adam didn't listen to it, the words indistinct to him. He didn't understand some of the stories, or why there were so many spoons. Everything was just so strange.

Adam was overwhelmed. He had been fine when Bev and Nigel had been talking, but Bedelia’s voice was grating, and everything was just too much. The music, the laughter and chatter from the other tables. The clinking of glasses, the scraping of cutlery on plates, the bright lights. The new, unfamiliar environment, there were too many people, he couldn’t focus.

It was all too much.

Adam pulled at his tie, loosening it slightly even though he knew it wouldn’t help. His breath was coming faster, he couldn’t speak, and he felt like he was drowning.

No one had noticed, either not knowing him well enough to notice the difference in his demeanour, or, as in Will’s case, engaging in a conversation with Nigel about poker. No one had noticed, except for Mischa, that is.

She looked at Adam, having finished her food. She could notice the slightly faster rise and fall of his chest, how his eyes seemed slightly glassy, how he seemed to disengage with everything around him. She always had been good at reading people, at seeing them.

Adam couldn’t take it anymore. It was too loud, too much, and he needed air. He stood up from the table, knocking his chair over in the process, practically running out of the doors and onto the deck.

The noise startled everyone at the table, Will turning to find his twin was gone. With a quick apology, he hurried after Adam, rushing through the tables and outside.

Mischa followed, her little legs not letting her go as fast as Will did, ignoring the shouts of her brothers behind her. She needed to check on Adam, wanted to make sure he was okay.

She followed him out to the deck, where Adam sat on the floor, knees to his chest and tears streaming down his cheeks. Will was sitting next to him, an arm around his shoulder.

Mischa copied Will, sitting on the other side. "Is he having a panic attack?" She asked, recognising some of the signs.

Will nodded, eyes wide. Mischa was older than she seemed, he realised. "He is. He gets overwhelmed sometimes, in new places. We aren't used to this." He looked at her, her big brown eyes on Adam. "How did you know, Mischa?"

Mischa nodded, looking too serious for a girl of her age. "I've had one before." When she'd woken up screaming from her nightmares, visions of burning and a dark forest. She didn't elaborate - it wasn't something to tell new friends.

Will looked at her properly, knowing that she was serious. She was too young to know what it's like, way too young. Her worry was borne out of understanding for what Adam was going through, he could see that. There was more to the Lecter's than he first realised.

A few seconds passed, as Adam leaned into his brother, controlling his breathing like Will had taught him years before. He could feel Mischa next to him, felt her slide her small hand in his, and he squeezed it gently. The world was returning to rights now, everything was clear and calm once again.

It was a surprisingly calm scene, with the quiet of the ocean around the three of them, compared to how fast Adam's heart was racing.

Nigel and Hannibal came out of the first class dining room, racing towards the others when they found them. The scene itself stopped them in their tracks - Mischa curled into Adams side, holding his hand as he leaned on Will.

"Is he okay?" Nigel asked, eyes wide with worry, never leaving Adam. He could see the tear tracks on his cheeks, longed to wipe them away. It wasn't the time or the place.

Will nodded. "He just got overwhelmed. He'll be okay. Sorry for running out on you like that." Will looked to Hannibal, expecting to see disappointment. Instead he found worry, identical to Mischa's.

Nigel shook his head. "Livened the place up a bit, to be fucking honest." He winced - if only livening the place up hadn't meant Adam running out on them.

"Language!" Mischa said, looking sternly at Nigel. She was too young to be hearing those words.

Will laughed, before carefully standing up, pulling Adam with him. "Come on, let's get back to our cabin."

Adam nodded, finally able to breathe and think again. He caught sight of Nigel, who approached him, pulling him in for a gentle hug against his chest. Adam leaned into it, felt Nigel kiss him on the head before they separated.

"My apologies for Bedelia." Hannibal said, talking to Will. He would be having a word with her later, about several things. He knew Bev would be showing her back to her suite, and that he shouldn't have run out on her like that. But Adam and Will were more important right now.

Will shook his head. "It's fine. We should go. See you tomorrow?" Will added hopefully. He wanted to see them again, Mischa included. And they'd need to return the suits to Bev anyway.

Hannibal nodded, as he picked Mischa up. She was getting tired, her eyes heavy.

"Goodnight." She yawned, head on Hannibal's shoulder. She hoped Adam would be okay.

Will lead Adam down the deck, back towards third class, not daring to look back at their new friends. A lot had happened today, a lot they all needed to process. A night's sleep would do them all good.

Chapter End Notes

I know panic attacks weren't exactly a thing in 1912, but its fiction, so pretend they were:)

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

> Tiny bit late this week but I've been busy and my pms is taking over this week, unfortunately.
>
> Should return to Wednesday updates!

12th April, 1912

Adam woke up to Will's arm around his waist, both of them still in bed. Last night came back to him slowly, and he had a faint memory of Nigel kissing him on the forehead. Was that real?

Will was already awake, and he kissed Adam on the forehead when he realised he was also awake. "Are you okay?" He asked, worried as usual. He knew Adam would tell him if he wasn't okay, but he still needed to ask.

Adam nodded, resting his head on his brother's shoulder. "I'm okay now. Did Nigel kiss me on the forehead last night?"

Will hummed. "He did. Does it bother you?" Adam was particular about who touched him, about anyone who wasn't Will touching him, really. He had seemed okay with Mischa last night, but it was usually slightly different with children.

"No." Adam shook his head. It had felt the same as when he'd landed on top of Nigel on the deck that first night - it felt good. "Why did he kiss me?" Was it a first class thing? Adam hoped not. He liked Nigel, more than he probably should. The kiss had been nice, Adam wondered what it would be like if Nigel kissed him properly.

"I think he likes you." Will wasn't stupid - he saw the way Nigel looked at Adam, he could tell how he was feeling. "Do you want to see them again?"

Adam nodded, eyes half closed.

"Good." Will said, holding Adam close. "Because I have an idea."

***

Nigel awoke to a knock on the door of their suite. It was too fucking early, that much he knew. Last night had been a mess, although it had been nice to hear the argument Hannibal had had with Bedelia after everything. It basically amounted to Bedelia being a rich bitch,

and Hannibal telling her that Will and Adam were their friends, and were to be treated as such. It was clear that Hannibal's patience was wearing thin.

Someone knocked on the door again, so Nigel begrudgingly got out of bed, his hair a mess, and answered it.

A steward stood there, a letter in his hand. “A letter for you sir, from someone in third class.” He handed the letter over, then turned and left without another word.

Nigel, still half asleep, closed the door before looking at the latter. Third class? There were only two people it could be from, then. He walked over to the chaise longue, gently sitting down in it before opening the letter.

Hannibal and Nigel,

Thank you for inviting us for dinner last night, it was very thoughtful. We’re sorry the evening probably didn’t go as planned, so we would like to return the favour. Meet us by the clock on the Grand Staircase, 6pm. Dress casually (if you can)

Ps. Tell Bev we’ll return the suits.

Will & Adam

Nigel read the letter over and over, a slightly stupid grin coming over him as he did so. He was still grinning when Hannibal woke up, reading the letter when Nigel handed it to him.

“I wonder what they have planned.” Hannibal wondered out loud, sitting next to his twin. It was an unexpected invite, that was for sure, but he wasn’t going to complain.

Nigel shrugged. “You like Will, don’t you?” A pointless question, it was obvious. The way Hannibal watched him, the way Hannibal kept inviting them to things, not wanting to let them go.

“I do.” Hannibal was enamoured with Will, he knew that much. Will was beautiful, protective, and honest. It was like a magnet pulling him in, but he couldn’t fully explain it. “You like Adam.”

Nigel grinned again just thinking of him, which was answer enough. He was gorgeous, and looked at Nigel with such a precious look in his eyes. “I do.” He said, mirroring his twin’s words. “What are we doing?” What would come of this, really? Because in reality, nothing could come of it. Society wouldn’t accept them, they couldn’t get married. Hannibal was already engaged. Where could this lead them?

Hannibal shook his head. “I don’t know. Let’s just see where it takes us, shall we?” Even if they parted ways in New York, they would still have this trip. Still have the memories. That meant something, surely?

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5pm arrived on the Titanic, as Will and Adam snuck their way to first class, wearing the suits borrowed from Bev. Somehow they found their way back to her cabin, and after gently knocking on the door, she let them in.

The boys switched their clothes, having left their old ones with Bev before the meal yesterday, before parting ways with a promise to see Bev again tomorrow.

6pm soon arrived, and Will and Adam waited by the grand staircase, gently leaning against each other. It had been a quiet day for them, as they had decided to stay in their cabin. It had helped to ground Adam, especially after yesterday.

They didn't have to wait long for the Lecter twins to appear, punctual as ever. As instructed, they had dressed down slightly, wearing simple (but expensive) shirts and trousers. No ties, no jackets, no waistcoats.

"Is this dressed down enough?" Nigel asked, wanting to break the ice a little bit. Adam looked well, he noticed a bit of colour in his cheeks.

Will laughed. They looked good, less…stuffy and rich. "It'll do. So, are you ready for a real party?"

***

A real party turned out to be the third class dining hall, packed to the brim with passengers. Everyone seemed happy, laughing, dancing and singing. The music was joyful, being played for fun by the third class passengers, and had much more life and emotion to it than what was played in the first class dining hall. People were dancing in the middle, being twirled by their partners, waltzing around the room, or even just dancing with no rhythm to it whatsoever.

Will was dancing around the room with a little girl, laughing and smiling. Adam sat at a table by the corner, watching with a smile on his own face. The music and noise didn't bother him here, everything blended together instead of being too much for him.

Hannibal and Nigel also sat with Adam, content just to watch for now, both drinking beer. It was a revelation down here in third class, really. Everyone seemed so happy, so carefree. You wouldn't think it was the same ship.

Will came over to the table, someone else dancing with the little girl now. "Come on, your turn." Will held his hand out to Hannibal, looking at him.

Hannibal looked around the room. "Won't people stare?" They were two men, after all. He was still aware of that much.

"No one cares down here." Will said, gesturing around the room. In the corner were two girls dancing, happily, and no one had said anything. "Live a little."

Sighing, Hannibal took Will's hand, still slightly wary. "Do you know how to dance?"

Will shook his head, pulling Hannibal close so they were standing nose to nose. "Teach me."

Hannibal couldn’t say no to that. He placed his hand on Will’s waist, placing Will’s hand on his shoulder. Then he clasped their other hands together, as if they were ballroom dancing. It was the closest they had ever stood, he realised.

Will and Hannibal danced around the room. Well, jumping was probably more accurate, because there wasn’t a routine or any steps to follow. They were in each other's arms, and that's what mattered. They moved around the room, as did many other couples, and no one took any notice that they were two men.

Will couldn’t stop staring at Hannibal, and started to realise maybe his feelings were more romantic than he first thought. Yesterday he had been trying to be polite to the men who had saved his brother's life, even while acknowledging that Hannibal interested him. Now, it was something else.

Hannibal, meanwhile, was wondering if he’d feel this happy again. Then he felt guilty that it was because of Will, a relative stranger, instead of Nigel or Mischa, his own family. He felt truly carefree, no worries about his impending marriage to Bedelia, his own future, his own life. He was happy, with Will. Happy down here, away from the rules and the general stuffiness of first class.

The music picked up in speed, much faster this time. Will and Hannibal stopped their dancing, instead retreating to a far corner to catch their breath, leaning against one another.

It couldn’t be helped, really. Emotions were high, their hearts were racing, and they were both happy.

So, when Will leaned his head on Hannibal’s shoulder, looking up at him, Hannibal couldn’t help himself.

He kissed Will, in full view of what was probably the entirety of third class, one hand on his cheek to keep him close.

Will kissed him back, unaware of their audience, winding his arms around Hannibal’s neck to keep him close.

They parted, foreheads resting against each other as they panted lightly, not saying a word. There was no one else in the room just then, just them.

***

“Shall we get out of here?” Nigel leaned over to Adam, where they both still sat at the table. He had noticed Adam was quiet, rocking slightly. And this atmosphere was rather loud.

Adam nodded, taking Nigel’s hand when he offered it, leading them both out of the dining hall. Privacy and quiet sounded nice, and Will would know where he’d gone. There were only so many places he could go on a ship, anyway.

Still holding hands, they made their way to the deck, wandering almost aimlessly on Nigel’s part. He just wanted some privacy, some peace, away from prying eyes and gossip mongers.

They soon reached the back of the ship, which was quiet at this time of night. Everyone else was in the dining room or their cabins, it was too late to be out on deck by now.

Adam looked at Nigel when he realised where they were. “This is where we first met.” He said, stomach twisting when he thought of that night again. The night that led him to Nigel, the night where he’d almost died.

“I’m glad we did, gorgeous.” Nigel said, also thinking back to that night. A twist of fate it had been, a happy one at that. He didn’t like to think of the alternative outcome.

“Nigel, I-” Adam stopped himself. He barely knew Nigel, and what he wanted to ask of him wasn’t right. But he couldn’t stop thinking about it. About feeling Nigel under him, how his heart skipped a beat every time Nigel called him gorgeous. It wasn’t right. But he wanted it. Even if he barely knew Nigel, he still wanted it.

Nigel stood in front of him, still holding hands. “What is it?” Adam looked so pretty like this, under the moonlight. He hadn't noticed when they'd first met, but now it was obvious.

“Will you kiss me?” Adam asked. His stomach was twisting, heart racing, at having to ask. But he wasn't like other people, he had to ask. He had to be direct, here.

Adam's mind was racing, thoughts going round and round in circles that never ended. Until he felt Nigel's hand on his face, tilting his head up, and then Nigel was kissing him.

The kiss was chaste, but that didn't make it any less emotional or important. Adam found that he liked being kissed by Nigel, as his arms came up to grab at Nigel's shoulders. It felt like he imagined - soft and sweet.

Nigel was seeing stars, and not the ones in the sky. Adam tasted sweet, and the little squeak of surprise was adorable. Nigel knew he'd want to kiss Adam more, forever.

They parted, staring at each other on the deck of the ship, eyes only for each other. They didn't know where they'd go from here, after this kiss.

But things would never be the same again.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

> Late again, sorry about that! Hopefully back to a weekly schedule now, or at least I should be after Christmas:)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nigel woke up to Adam's arm across his middle, a welcome reminder of who was in the bed with him. The previous night came to him in small flashes - the kiss, the small voice afterwards that so sweetly asked ‘stay with me?’, holding hands all the way to the third class cabin. They had found Will and Hannibal in the dining hall, all 4 of them making their way to the cabin without really talking. The events of the night were obvious to all.

2 small beds were not enough to hold 4 grown men, but they made it work anyway, Will and Hannibal in the bottom bunk, Adam and Nigel in the top. Nothing happened, they never went any further than chaste kisses, but they were unwilling to part for the night, so it seemed.

Nigel had Adam wrapped around him tightly, a necessity in the small bed. It was unusual, waking up next to someone that wasn’t Hannibal or Mischa, but it was welcome all the same.

Adam stirred in his sleep, snuggling closer to Nigel, if that was even possible, before he slowly woke up to the sight of Nigel watching him. Adam blushed, remembering the previous night. “Good morning.”

“Morning, gorgeous.” Nigel couldn’t help it, he leaned down to peck Adam on the lips. After their first kiss, he couldn’t get enough. He never would. It always left Adam with the sweetest, slightly dreamy look on his face.

In the bottom bunk, Will and Hannibal were already awake, kissing repeatedly and quietly. Ever since last night they couldn’t keep their hands off each other, or their mouths.

Will pulled away, hearing Nigel and Adam above them. It brought him out of the small cocoon he had been living in, just content to keep kissing Hannibal. But now reality was setting in. This couldn’t last. There was a world outside of this room, unfortunately.

“What now?” Will whispered to Hannibal, never taking his eyes off him.

“Stay with us, for the day.” Hannibal couldn’t make any promises for the future, he knew Will had the same worries as him, but he could promise him today, at the very least. It was slightly ridiculous, the way he felt about someone he had known for 3 days, but it was real. Waking up with Will in his bed felt right, in every sense of the word.

So, it was decided. Will and Adam would spend all day with Nigel and Hannibal, none of them willing to part with the other. Any worries for the future would be put aside for now.

***

“Where the hell have you been?” Chiyoh demanded, arms crossed and with a stern look on her face. She was standing in the Lecter’s first class suite, Mischa holding on to her leg.

Hannibal and Nigel, the subject of Chiyoh’s ire, had just walked into the room, Will and Adam in tow.

“You didn’t leave a note, Mischa was terrified something had happened!” Chiyoh said, picking up their younger sister, who was just looking at her brothers. “She had another nightmare last night, made worse by you two not being here when she woke up.”

Hannibal and Nigel, to their credit, raced towards Mischa, Hannibal taking her in his arms as Nigel kissed her on the forehead, murmuring something in another language.

Will and Adam looked on awkwardly, not sure what to do, watching as Hannibal and Nigel soothed their sister.

“It’s our fault.” Will said, waving awkwardly. “We invited them down to the third class dining room, and they ended up staying in our cabin.” He wasn’t entirely sure how much Chiyoh knew, but he did know lying wouldn’t look good.

Chiyoh moved to stand closer to them, her features softening a bit. “It’s their fault, *idioti*. A simple note would have done.” Her frustration was borne out of love, and concern. Mischa had been worried when they hadn’t come back at their usual time, and her worry always pulled at Chiyoh’s heartstrings.

Adam was looking around the room rather than fully paying attention to the conversation, noting just how different it was to their own third class cabin. It was bigger, more furnishings, more everything. His and Will’s entire third class cabin could have fit into a third of the room.

Hannibal and Nigel were coddling Mischa, asking about her nightmare and giving reassurances that they wouldn’t leave again. The brothers turned to Chiyoh, Nigel giving her a small kiss on the cheek.

“Thank you for looking after Mischa.” Nigel said, hugging her tightly. “We got slightly distracted by Will and Adam.” He winked at Adam over Chiyoh’s shoulder, enjoying the blush it caused to creep up his cheeks.

“Why are Will and Adam here?” Mischa asked, her hands around Hannibal’s neck. She was still wearing her nightdress, and even though she knew it was improper to still be wearing it when they had guests over, she didn’t particularly care. Her brothers were still in their clothes from last night.

“We invited them, sweetheart.” Nigel said, having let go of Chiyoh. “We asked them to spend the day with us.”

Will wasn’t sure what to think. How much were Han and Nigel going to tell their sister? Because he wasn’t sure he could spend the whole day with Hannibal and not kiss him again at least once.

“Yay!” Mischa shouted, happy to see her new friends again.

With everyone seemingly happy at the day's plans, the day could finally start. But first, Mischa needed to change into her day clothes and Hannibal and Nigel needed to change out of yesterday's clothes.

Now the day could really begin, with no set plan ahead of them. Chiyoh took Mischa for her daily walk along the deck, for some fresh air and exercise, leaving the two sets of twins together in the first class suite.

Adam felt tired, all of a sudden. He was in a new environment, and the excitement and everything that had happened last night had worn him down slightly. He yawned as Nigel walked up to him, having said goodbye to Mischa seconds earlier.

“Tired, gorgeous?” Nigel asked, placing a hand on Adam’s cheek, kissing him gently.

Adam blushed, remembering that Will was standing right next to him. “I haven’t been sleeping very well on the ship.” He explained, liking the feel of Nigel’s palm against his face. “What are we doing today?”

Nigels brows furrowed, he looked concerned. “Do you want to take a short nap? You can use our bed, I don’t mind.” Adam looked tired, the poor thing. Nigel understood why, now, having slept in third class himself. The third class cabins were closer to the engines, so they weren’t exactly quiet even at night. He hadn’t slept much last night either.

Adam looked to Will, as he always did when he wasn’t entirely sure what the right thing to say was. He wanted to nap, he needed it really as he hadn’t slept well last night. But Nigel wanted to spend the day with him, and sleeping would take away from that.

Will nodded, not needing words to communicate to Adam what he meant. It’s up to you, there’s no right or wrong choice.

Adam looked to Nigel, all his thoughts happening in less than a second. He didn’t feel up to actually doing anything today, at least nothing like walking on the deck, or whatever else it was first class people like Nigel did. “Can we just talk for a while? I like hearing your voice.”

Nigel smiled brightly at the slight ego boost he got. Talking was something he could definitely do, especially if Adam looked at him like that. “We can do that.” He took Adam’s hand, gently guiding him to the bedroom where they both lay down on the bed, on top of the covers, mirroring the position they had woken up in.

Adam found it easier to talk this way, not needing to keep making eye contact with Nigel, able to just snuggle into him and cuddle.

Back in the main room of the suite, Will and Hannibal were alone at last.

Hannibal pulled Will towards him, kissing him chastely. “I have something I want to show you.” He murmured, pulling Will to the safe tucked away in a corner.

The safe was actually Bedelia’s, and had been in her suite when the journey started, but she had declared the sight of it ugly and demanded Hannibal move it to his suite instead, so it had ended up here.

The safe opened, revealing the contents. Will looked at the contents in awe - more money than he had ever seen in his life, in neat stacks, a few important documents, a jewellery case for a necklace, and an artist portfolio that Hannibal pulled out, carefully before sealing the safe again.

Hannibal led Will over to the sofa, handing him the portfolio almost hesitantly. “You enjoyed Mischa’s art immensely the other day, I thought you might appreciate these.”

Will opened the portfolio, carefully going through the various drawings in it. They were good, better than good, they were stunning, a sign of true talent. The scenes seemed so vivid it was like Will was actually there. It wasn't until he was nearly through all of them that he stopped, looking at a few drawings in particular.

One was of Adam and Nigel, walking along the deck next to each other. There was another of Will, holding a cigarette up to his lips, like the first night he had met Hannibal. There was another, Mischa looking out over the deck of the ship.

He looked at Hannibal, not quite sure what to say. To think that Hannibal had drawn him, drawn Adam, and thought the drawings worthy to place alongside the others, alongside other artwork of his family? It was an honour.

Will grabbed Hannibal’s tie, pulling him in to kiss him, trying to convey everything in that one kiss. He pulled away, breathless. “They’re amazing. You’re amazing.”

Hannibal smiled gently, proud of his own work, happy that Will liked it. He didn’t show his artwork to just anyone. “Good.”

“Can I watch you draw?” Will needed to see how he did it, watch his fingers work, see the image come to life.

Hannibal nodded, “I did have something in mind.” He stood, walking over to grab his supplies.

Will thought as he watched, having his own idea for something Hannibal could draw. But not yet, not with Adam and Nigel in the next room, and Chiyoh and Mischa returning at some point. For Will’s idea, they needed privacy.

Hannibal sat down, sketchbook in his lap as Will sat next to him attentively, turning the page to begin.

Chapter End Notes

Seeing as I won't be updating before Christmas, Merry Christmas! 🎄

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

> Sorry for the slightly short chapter but I figured this one would be better as it's own chapter:)

Will watched Hannibal draw, watched as art was created before his very eyes in their first class stateroom. They sat together on the sofa, Hannibal with a sketching pad in front of him, his pencil dancing across the page.

Will sat next to him, as close as possible to see the magic happen, see the picture taking shape. It didn't take long for Will to realise what was being drawn, or rather, who was being drawn.

It was him, laughing and smiling, in the third class dining room, as he danced around the room in Hannibal's arms. Hannibal had recreated it perfectly, down to the atmosphere.

Will smiled at the realisation, and soon took to just watching Hannibal's face as he drew, instead. He could see the concentration, the effort it was taking him. It took everything in Will not to kiss him right then and there.

Soon enough, the drawing was finished, and as soon as Hannibal had put everything away, Will kissed him, gently.

"Thank you, for letting me watch." Will said earnestly, arms around Hannibal's neck.

Hannibal looked at him fondly, a small smile appearing on his face. "Of course, Will." He sat back on the sofa, Will in his lap. Will had something on his mind, he could tell.

"..Can I ask you something slightly personal?" Will asked, shy all of a sudden. He knew Hannibal didn't owe him anything, but there was something he was curious about, something Mischa had said. "About Mischa." Now seemed as good a time as any to ask.

Hannibal placed his hands on Will's hips, ignoring the implications of their position and the feelings it was stirring up inside him. "What would you like to know?" He was so enamoured with the boy he would have answered anything, quite possibly, if it meant Will would stay there.

"Mischa mentioned that she had panic attacks." Will started, trying to word it carefully. "Did something happen to cause it?" *Did something happen to you?* Because whilst Will had mentioned his own family, his own past, Hannibal refrained from saying anything.

Hannibal fell silent for a moment, before speaking in a whisper. “Our parents died, suddenly, when Mischa was only 6 years old.” His eyes had taken on a distant gaze, and suddenly he wasn’t looking at Will anymore. He was back home, his true home, in Lithuania.

Will didn't need his heightened sense of empathy to see the sadness growing in Hannibal, it was plain as day on his face. Shit. He shouldn’t have asked. “I’m sorry, forget I asked, I didn't mean to…”

Hannibal shook his head, to silence Will. “It’s perfectly alright, Will. You told me about your family, it’s only fair I tell you of my own, to place us on even footing.”

“Even Steven.” Will whispered, half to himself, half to try and lighten the atmosphere slightly.

Hannibal smiled. “We grew up in Lithuania.” He said, getting straight to his own backstory. “Our family was well off, I’m not entirely sure how. I was too young back then to truly understand it all. But when Nigel and I were 17, our house was attacked. I don’t wish to talk about the specifics of that night, but our parents were killed in front of us. We escaped through the woods, which had been set ablaze. Somehow we found our way to safety, and we ended up in England eventually.” Hannibal was lost in that night, still in those woods. He could smell the fire, could hear Mischa’s confused cries.

Will placed a hand on his face, gently stroking Hannibal’s cheek. He could feel the sadness emanating off the man beneath him, and feel how much he had lost. “I’m sorry.” He whispered. Sorry for asking, for his own curiosity.

“You have nothing to apologise for, Will.” It felt good to tell him, Hannibal realised. He had left some things out, of course. Some things were best left between him and Nigel.

Looking up at Will, he realised something. Somewhere along these last few days, he had fallen in love.

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In the bedroom, Nigel and Adam lay in the bed, hands entwined as they talked.

The conversation flowed naturally, something Adam sometimes found difficult with new people. But Nigel knew exactly what to say, how to get Adam to talk as well. Their conversations were easy, smooth.

By coincidence, Nigel brought up the same topic that Will had with Hannibal - family. “Is it just you and Will? No other family?” He asked.

Adam stared at the ceiling, thinking back to his and Will’s dad. He nodded. “Dad wasn’t very nice, so we left as soon as we could. It’s just been Will and I for several years.” He didn’t feel sad about it - as long as he had Will he was okay. He turned to look at Nigel. “Where are your parents?”

Nigel flinched, he couldn’t help it. He knew Adam asking was innocent, a way to keep the conversation going. But it still stung, slightly. “Our parents died a few years ago.”

Adam swallowed. “I’m sorry.” He was never very good at comforting people, it was hard. “You don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to.”

Nigel shook his head, squeezing Adam’s hand. “It’s okay. It was sudden, and violent. Han and I escaped with Mischa, who was fucking terrified. We were lost for a bit, until we found Chiyoh, who helped us and has stayed with us ever since." The specifics didn't matter, not really. "Mischa still has nightmares sometimes."

Adam watched as a tear rolled down Nigel's face, so he moved closer, snuggling in to Nigel's side to try and offer some comfort. "How did you end up on Titanic?"

Nigel swallowed, hugging Adam closer to him. "We found our way to England, somehow. Stayed with our Uncle Robertus for a bit, until he moved to New York." He couldn't go on. He had steadfastly avoided thinking about his past, about 6 years ago, and it all came rushing back.

The smoke, the screams. The blood. How everything had changed in the blink of an eye. More tears escaped, as he remembered carrying Mischa through the woods.

Adam noticed the tears, and wasn't sure what to do. He remembered that when he was upset, Will would try to distract him, talk about space. Maybe that would work on Nigel. "Did you know that there's an asteroid in space called Albert? It was discovered last year and named after Albert Salomon von Rothschild, an Austrian banker. Its official name is 719 Albert."

Nigel blinked. Was Adam talking about space right now? It was a sudden switch to the topic of conversation, especially as Nigel had just been crying. "Albert is a strange name for an asteroid." He said, confused.

Adam nodded. "I've always wondered what Austria is like, they have an astronomical observatory there, where you can see the stars and planets in more detail." He'd love to be able to see the sky in more detail, but he couldn't. Knowing that there were other things out there was enough for Adam, though.

Nigel immediately added 'Take Adam to Austria' to his mental list of things to do one day. "Maybe we could go together." They hadn't even spoken about the future yet Nigel was already planning it. With Adam.

Adam nodded. "I'd like that." He said quietly. "Are you okay now? You were crying before and I wasn't sure what to do. But when I'm sad Will distracts me by talking about space." It worked every time.

"I'm okay Star, thanks for distracting me." Nigel kissed Adam's forehead, grateful. "Tell me more about space, I don't know anything."

It turned out, Adam knew a lot about space, so he told Nigel everything he could think of, talking excitedly and enthusiastically. All the while he stayed curled up to Nigel.

Nigel listened carefully, taking in every word, every bit of information. He could listen to Adam talk for hours on end, he was sure of it. He was also sure if something else, as he listened to Adam.

Nigel was falling in love.

Chapter 9

“Would you really take me to Austria?” Adam asked, still curled up to Nigel on the bed. He had always wanted to visit, ever since he read about the observatory in a few-days-old newspaper last year, the only way he and Will could afford one. But, Adam knew realistically that he and Will couldn’t afford to go abroad, not to Austria. They were only managing this transatlantic crossing because Will had won the tickets, otherwise they’d still be in England.

It was a dream Adam had pushed aside, among other things.

Nigel nodded. “If you would let me, star. I’d love to.” *I love you*. He was already imagining him and Adam having a future together, he realised. A future away from the Titanic, if that were possible. It seemed like this ship was it’s own little bubble, away from the rest of the world. Nigel didn’t want it to burst.

Adam blinked. “What happens when we arrive in New York?” He asked. He needed to know. He liked plans, needed a schedule, it was easier that way. Unknowns were scary, and confusing sometimes. Adam had no idea what would happen in New York - where would he and WIll go? And what about this…whatever this was with Nigel? It scared him, not knowing. If Nigel was just going to cast him aside when they left the ship, then why was he still here?

Nigel took one of Adam’s hands in his own, looking at him. Big blue eyes, full of wonder but also betraying how scared Adam was. Nigel kissed him, soft and sweet. “Stay with me.” He whispered. Anything louder felt wrong, somehow. “I don’t think I can let you go.”

Adam’s heart beat faster at Nigel’s words, because that's what he wanted, too. But, for one small second, his anxieties and logic won. “What will we do? We can’t marry. I don’t even know where I’ll be living. We’ve known each other for 4 days.” It was a weak but logical argument. 4 days wasn’t enough to fall in love, was it? Adam was wondering. He liked Nigel, and the idea of never seeing him again hurt.

Nigel’s heart skipped a beat at the mention of marriage, the idea of Adam wearing his ring. Adam being his. He understood the logic, and the reality check that it had only been 4 days was strong. He brought his other hand up to Adam's face, stroking his cheek. “Logically, it makes no fucking sense, I agree. But I’ve been happier with you these 4 days than I remember being in a long time, gorgeous. Forget logic, forget that we’re two men, completely different in every way. The only thing that matters is how we feel, everything else we can figure out along the way.”

Adam gave it some thought, conceding that Nigel was making sense. Because that’s what it felt like, with Nigel. It made sense. It felt right. Nigel understood him, in a way only Will usually did. He nodded, forcing himself to make eye contact with Nigel. “Okay. I’d love to stay with you, Nigel.”

Nigel grinned, before leaning down to kiss Adam, taking his breath away.

-

Away from the bedroom, Will was sitting in Hannibal's lap. "I don't want to leave." He admitted. His mind was in two places at once, as always. The here and now, on Hannibal's lap, and looking to the future, planning ahead. It was a necessity when life was so unpredictable.

"Am I so uninteresting to you that you're considering leaving even when sat in my lap, Will?" Hannibal asked, hands on his boys waist. There was nothing else for Hannibal right now, except Will in front of him.

Will smiled. "Just thinking about the future. Our future." If they even had one. Hannibal was engaged, for one. Will hated the idea of Hannibal being married to that woman, after how she'd treated Adam.

Hannibal smiled, leaning in to press a kiss to Will's neck. "Do you mean my engagement to Miss Du Maurier?" Before boarding this ship, Hannibal had been secure in his decision. That wasn't so true, anymore. Now that he knew what love meant, he wasn't sure he could go through with it.

Will nodded. A thought crossed his mind, and he said it aloud on impulse. "Leave her. Stay with me and Adam, instead. You, Nigel, Chiyoh and Mischa. We'll find somewhere together, all of us." He grew more convinced of it the more he said. But he knew Hannibal, knew he was polite, upper class, and dutiful to a fault. He wouldn't just-

"Okay."

One word cut into Will's train of thought, as he prepared himself for the rejection. It took a moment for him to register it, and when he did, he kissed Hannibal, hard.

They both pulled away, breathless.

"You want to?" Will asked, needing to be sure. This was stupid, it had been 4 days for fucks sake. Yet it felt longer, and it felt right, being with Hannibal. He didn't want to lose this. Part of it was Adam, as well. He could see how Adam felt about Nigel, and this future he was thinking of would be good for all of them.

Hannibal nodded. "More than anything, my love." Staying with Will would make him the happiest man alive. Marrying Bedelia held no appeal for him anymore. Not after he had seen what she was really like, at the dinner the other night. A woman like that is not who he wanted Mischa to grow up around. His plan to marry her for stability had never been an entirely good plan, anyway.

After a short time just being with each other, Will and Hannibal walked to the bedroom, wanting to share their newfound plans with their respective brothers. They both stopped in the doorway, watching for a few moments as they took in the sight of Nigel and Adam curled up to each other in the bed.

Adam looked over the bedroom towards the door, smiling when he saw Will. He nudged Nigel slightly, knowing they needed to move, and they both got out of bed, still holding hands.

The talk was simple, as all of them sat around the suite, neither couple wanting to be apart from each other. They admitted their feelings, and shared their plans, laughing gently when they realised each couple had come up with the same idea. They decided to hold off on telling Mischa and Chiyoh, wanting to keep this to themselves for now.

It wasn't long before the two women returned from their walk, Mischa's hair slightly messy from the wind and Chiyoh taking note of how close everyone was sitting. Adam and Nigel had the sofa, side by side. Will and Hannibal sat in two chairs, moved to be nearer each other.

Mischa climbed into Nigel's lap, sitting sideways so her feet rested on Adam's lap as well. "What are we doing today?" She asked, the same way she did every morning.

"We could stay here today." Nigel said, trying to smooth down Mischa's hair. There wasn't much to do for children on board the ship, at least nothing Mischa wanted to do. "We could play poker."

Mischa nodded at the idea. She herself couldn't quite play poker, but she usually sat in somebody's lap and tried to help, in her own way.

The table was set up in the middle, the cards dealt, and a currency decided upon - buttons. Mischa had apparently brought her collection of buttons with her, for exactly this purpose. The buttons had come from various places, from old dresses, found on the floor, some particularly nice ones were bought especially for her. She liked counting them when she needed a distraction.

Throughout the rest of the day, the poker game continued, with Chiyoh acting as the dealer. Adam watched, explaining some things to Mischa about the rules, which he understood. He just had no poker face.

Will proved exactly how good he was at poker, managing to beat Hannibal and Nigel several times as they played the day away, only stopping for a light meal and some drinks.

Mischa grew bored, eventually, as did everyone else, and she decided to show off her own artwork to her new friends, Will and Adam. She was a lot like Hannibal in her artwork, although her drawings were more fictional, fantastical compared to Hannibal's more realistic artwork.

Whilst they were distracted, Chiyoh watched Hannibal and Nigel as they shared a drink. She didn't need to say anything, or ask anything, she knew exactly what was happening anyway. She was happy that Hannibal and Nigel seemed happy.

-

Chiyoh took Mischa on her daily 3pm walk around the deck, for more exercise and fresh air, and they both bid goodbye to the twins, promising to be back soon.

Almost immediately, Hannibal took Will into his arms, kissing him gently. It had been torture to be in the same room as him and not be able to kiss or touch him at all. Will smiled into the kiss, thinking the same thing.

Nigel felt the same about Adam, and noticed as he took Adam in his arms that the boy seemed quiet. It seemed an entire day with a 10 year old, in an unfamiliar environment, had overwhelmed him slightly. Like before, Nigel led him to the bedroom, to just lie together quietly.

Hannibal and Will stayed standing, arms wrapped around each other as they kissed, not needing to speak.

They were so wrapped up in each other they failed to notice the door to the suite open slightly, as Jack Crawford, Bedelia's valet, looked into the suite, and saw the two men in their embrace.

1997

Chapter Summary

Just a small interlude because I completely forgot that I included future!Mischa at the start, oops:)

1997

Mischa had settled into her room on board the research vessel, a few days after calling Brock Lovett. Her granddaughter had tried to convince Mischa not to come, or to at least let her go with her, but Mischa had said she needed to do this alone.

It was strange to think that below her, some 13,000 feet below the surface, lay the wreck of the Titanic. That she had been here before, what felt like a lifetime ago. She hadn't been back on the ocean since then.

Mischa could very clearly split her life into 3 distinct parts - the first, her childhood before her parents death, in Lithuania with her brothers. The second, the years of just them, meeting Chiyoh, the engagement to Bedelia. The third was after the Titanic, where life was never the same again.

She had vague memories of the night her parents died, but she could clearly remember the Titanic, every single bit. Meeting Will and Adam, seeing her brothers fall in love. Then the iceberg, the sinking, the longest night of her life.

She couldn't forget it if she tried.

And being back here, in the same place where it had all happened, was bringing everything back. The cold, the wait, the darkness. The panic, and terror that had flooded through her. The grief that had never gone away.

She had unpacked her bag, mostly, and pulled one last item out of it - a photo frame, which she placed on the bedside table. The photo was of her family, years after the sinking, although it was incomplete.

She hadn't cried in years, not about her family. It was pointless. No amount of tears would bring anyone back, and she knew it. But Mischa let herself cry now, just this once. For what could have been, and what never was.

Everyone was gone now, leaving only herself to remember that night. The only one who remembered Hannibal with Will, Adam with Nigel. When she was gone, and that wouldn't be long now she knew, there'd be no one to remember it.

It's why she was here, to explain the drawings, tell the story of that night. So someone would know. To put it out into the world, so that their story wouldn't die with her, wouldn't be forgotten.

It deserved to be remembered.

Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

We have finally reached the smut!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

13th April, 1912

The Lecters had gone for dinner in one of the first class restaurants, whilst Will and Adam had returned to third class for their meal, not feeling up to first class dining tonight. It wasn't exactly their style, anyway. Their meal was a fairly simple affair, simply eating and then leaving the third class dining room, not up to any of the festivities tonight.

Afterwards Will and Adam found themselves walking along the deck, just the two of them. They hadn't been alone together all day, so this time was needed. Adam liked the quiet, the calmness of the ocean. They walked side by side, arms occasionally brushing, lost in their own thoughts.

"You won't leave me, will you?" Adam asked, looking worriedly at his twin. All afternoon Will's attention had been on Hannibal and the poker game, and it had left Adam feeling a tiny bit abandoned. Was this their future? Adam had been alone with Will for so long, he didn't want to be cast aside for someone else now.

Will stopped walking, turning to Adam. "Never." He placed his hands on his twins shoulders. "Adam, we're twins. I couldn't leave you if I tried. No matter what happens when we get off this boat, where we end up, I'm with you to the end of the line."

Adam smiled at the phrase, something Will had said often to soothe Adam's fears in the dead of night. Whenever things got too difficult for them, when something Adam had done or not done had made things harder. When a small voice in Adams head said that it would be easier without him, that Will would be better off without having to look after him. "The end of the line."

Will pulled him in for a hug, arms wrapping around him tightly. "What's going on in that head of yours?" He pressed a kiss to Adam's forehead.

Adam buried his head in Will's shoulder. "I don't want things to change." He didn't have to say anything else, Will knew. Will always knew. Adam liked routine, always had.

And now things would change. Assuming everything went to plan, that they stayed with the Lecters, then everything would be different. It had been Will and Adam on their own for so

long, that adding 4 more people into the mix was bound to change everything.

“Things can change for the better. As long as you’ve got me, you’ll be okay.” Will kissed his twin on the head, a comforting gesture. “You’re my number one, always.”

Adam nodded, pulling back slightly. “It's gotten colder out here.” He shivered slightly.

Will realised he was right - the temperature had dropped. It was too cold to be back out on deck, way too cold. Together, the twins made their way back inside, heading towards the Lecter’s room.

In the hallway leading to the room, Will spotted someone walking away from the room, dressed in a long grey coat. He shrugged it off, not thinking anything of it, as they waited for the Lecters to return.

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The meal was pleasant, although Hannibal and Nigel both missed Will and Adam terribly, and they found that they ate faster than usual.

Mischa and Chiyoh returned to their suite as the twins retired to the Smoking Lounge, at Nigel’s behest, finding 2 unoccupied armchairs in a corner to talk in private.

“How do our new plans affect Uncle Robertus?” Nigel asked, cigarette in his hand as he smoked it. He knew what the original plan was - Hannibal would marry Bedelia, inherit their father’s estate, and they would finally be somewhat independent and stable.

“I’m not sure.” Hannibal sighed. “There isn’t much to inherit from Father’s estate, I am led to believe it is the money Robertus had put aside for all of us to leave Lithuania.” Hannibal didn’t know the full story, and didn’t care to relive that night, but as far as he knew, the attack on their family wasn’t random. Their father was planning for them all to leave Lithuania and never return. The inheritance was the money put aside for their new life, more or less.

Nigel took another drag of his cigarette. Finance wasn’t his thing, but money was. As long as they had somewhere to live, somewhere *permanent* to live, and enough money to live on, that was enough for him. No Bedelia would be a pleasant bonus. “Maybe he’ll let us have the fucking money anyway. We’ll cross that bridge when we get to it, I guess.” He shrugged. He’d never been much of a planner anyway.

Hannibal smiled. “We shall.” He switched to their native language for some privacy, aware of the company they were surrounded by. “Do you love Adam?” He had never seen Nigel so enamoured before, it was interesting to watch it play out.

Nigel nodded, not phased by the language switch. “I do. You love Will.” That much was obvious by how much Han had drawn the boy, preserving their time together on ink and paper. After Hannibal nodded, he continued. “I love you too, you know. I don’t say it often enough, but I do.” He meant it.

“I love you too, dear brother.” Hannibal replied, also meaning it wholly. They had never been the type of family to talk about their feelings too often, but it felt good to do it now.

Feelings (and cigarette) aside, the brothers stood up, departing the smoking lounge to head back to their suite, back to Will and Adam.

***

“Will! Adam!” Mischa shouted as she and Chiyoh turned the corner, seeing the twins waiting outside their suite. She ran as fast as she could, jumping into Will’s arms. “You’re still here.”

Will smiled, catching her easily. “Of course we are. Why, did you want us to leave?” He shifted her so she was resting on his hip.

“No.” Mischa said, wrapping her arms around Will’s neck. “I like you. Because Han and Nigel like you.” It was that simple. Her brothers obviously like them, so she did too. It must be a Lecter thing. “I like Adam, too.”

Adam looked at her, smiling gently. It had been nice, with Mischa that afternoon as the others played poker. He didn’t feel so awkward around her as he did with other people, and it must have been her age.

Adam was saved from trying to respond when Chiyoh reached them, looking fondly at her young charge.

“For the record, I like both of you as well. I’ve never seen Hannibal and Nigel so happy.” She said sincerely, careful not to say too much in front of Mischa.

The two men in question took that moment to appear, walking down the hallway towards their room, side by side.

“Come on, Mischa. Time for bed.” Chiyoh said, lifting her out of Will’s arms to carry her into the room. Why they had all been stood around in the hallway she didn’t know.

They all made their way inside, Mischa and Chiyoh heading straight for their bedroom after bidding everyone good night, and closing the door.

Immediately Hannibal went to Will, kissing him gently and holding him close. He had missed this, even though it had been merely hours since they had parted. He watched Hannibal lead Adam to their bedroom, for privacy.

Will glanced at the clock in the room, surprised to see the time. “It’s 7pm.” The way time worked on the ship was strange, he thought. Maybe it was because they were in the middle of the ocean, going from one timezone to the next, or because this didn’t seem like real life at all. But it had been 3 days since they'd met, and it felt longer.

“Do you want to leave?” Hannibal asked, his hands around Will’s waist. He hadn’t realised the time, either, too wrapped up in his family to notice anything else.

Will could feel Hannibal pressed against him, and his idea from earlier returned to his mind. He wanted Hannibal to draw him. He shook his head. “No. I want you to draw me.”

“I already have, my love.” Many times. More times than he had shown Will, actually. Hannibal would draw him a thousand times over, if he could.

Will smirked. “From memory, yes. But not from the real thing.” He had an idea in mind, something that would hopefully be fun for both of them. They would need privacy, though. Having Mischa sleeping next door would not be ideal. He smoothed down Hannibal’s tie, another idea forming. “I want you to draw me, wearing only your tie.” A claim of ownership.

Hannibal almost growled at the thought, his grip on Will tightening almost to the point of bruises. “I could do that. Did you have somewhere in mind?” Somewhere without his little sister around. As much as he loved Mischa, she needn't be around for this.

“Our third class cabin, if you can find it in you to stoop to my level.” It was perfect - their cabin was small, cosy, and most importantly, private. Will smiled when Hannibal nodded in agreement. “I’ll tell Adam while you grab your equipment.”

In the bedroom, Nigel and Adam were having a similar conversation regarding their plans for the night. “What do you want to do tonight, star?” Nigel asked, one hand cupping Adam’s chin.

Adam thought for a moment. He didn’t like being cooped up too much, despite the sheer size of the ship it still felt claustrophobic. And they had been inside all day. He wanted to walk around the ship, exploring. Looking at the stars, this time without falling overboard. With Nigel. “Will you look at the stars with me?” He asked.

Nigel smiled. “I’m looking at one right now, but yes.” No one else would be on deck except for crew members, and they were essentially paid to not notice anything about the passengers. He and Adam could even hold hands, out there with no one else around.

Will knocked on the door, poking his head through. “Hannibal and I are heading to our third class room. He wants to draw me.” He left out the naked bit, knowing Adam didn’t need to know that. Or Nigel, really. “In private.”

Adam nodded. “Okay. Nigel and I are going to look at the stars. We’ll meet you back here later.” He waved as Will disappeared again, and both couples set off on their respective journeys.

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Hannibal knew the third class cabin was small, he had been there only the night before. It felt like a lifetime ago, to be honest, that he had woken up in the bottom bunk with Will in his arms. Hopefully that would happen again tomorrow morning. And every morning for the rest of their lives.

It felt smaller this time, maybe because he finally saw just how small the room was. There was a bunk bed, a sink on the wall and a chair, that was it. There wasn't much space to move, really. They were quite literally in close quarters. Hannibal wasn't complaining.

Ever the gentleman, Hannibal turned around as Will got undressed, wasting no time. They both knew why they were here, to be perfectly honest. Hannibal handed him the tie he was wearing, anticipating the coming moment as Will tied it around his neck.

Will took a deep breath, slightly anxious even though this was his idea. Then, he tapped Hannibal on the shoulder so he could finally turn around.

Hannibal felt no shame as he let his eyes wander over Will's body, just as breath-taking and perfect as he had hoped it would be. And it was all for him - the artwork that this session produced would be for his eyes only, he knew that.

Will resisted the urge to cover himself up, although it was too late for that now. He reached over to the sink, taking a dime off the side of it. He held it out to Hannibal. "I wanted you to draw me like this, so as a paying customer, I expect to get what I want." He placed the dime in Hannibal's suit jacket pocket, patting it.

Hannibal nodded, still slightly entranced by Will's body. He needed to keep it together long enough to draw the man, at least. He still hadn't said anything.

Will worried at why Hannibal hadn't even spoken yet. He felt the self consciousness creeping in. "Is everything okay? I know the lighting isn't great in here-"

Hannibal silenced him with a kiss, hands on either side of his head. He pulled back after a few seconds, looking Will straight in the eyes. "Will, you'd look amazing even if the only lighting in here was a few candles and a matchstick." He kissed Will again to prove the point. "Now, lie over there on the bed."

Will followed Hannibal's precise instructions as to how he needed to pose, as it seemed Hannibal had a specific vision in mind for this drawing. Soon enough Will was laying on his side, one arm up by his face, the other resting on his hip.

Hannibal sat on the chair, closer than he would normally sit for a picture study like this but it was the best he could do in these close quarters. He rested his artist's pad on his knee, pencil in the other hand, and then it could begin.

Will found he wasn't too good at sitting still, or more accurately, lying still. He kept twitching, shifting slightly, until one look from Hannibal made him freeze. The tie, Hannibal's tie, rested against Will's chest, bringing attention to his face.

Both of them lost track of time, as Hannibal focussed on the page in front of him and Will tried not to move, as he noticed Hannibal blushing occasionally. It was cute.

All too soon, it was done, as Hannibal placed his pencils in his jacket pocket, the drawing finally finished. Will moved off the bed, stretching his arms and legs, finally, before he climbed onto Hannibal's lap, still naked.

Hannibal showed him the drawing, hoping Will would see what he saw. Even if he was currently being tempted by a very naked Will on his lap.

Will looked at the drawing, at himself on the page. Was that really what he looked like? He thought. Because he looked…good, to put it plainly. It looked like it belonged in a museum, there was so much love and care crafted into it. The tie really stood out, too. Will loved it.

“Thank you.” He kissed Hannibal gently on the lips. “It’s stunning.” He meant it.

“You are.” Hannibal replied, looking Will in the eyes. “Can I take you to bed?” Ever the gentleman, even with a naked and presumably very willing Will in his lap, Hannibal still needed to be sure.

“Fuck yes.” Will said, carefully placing the drawing on the floor. “I think you’re a bit overdressed, Mr Lecter.” He smirked, climbing off Hannibal’s lap.

Almost in the blink of an eye Will was pushed back on the bed, a suddenly shirtless Hannibal on top of him. This was it, this was really happening.

Will helped him out of trousers, then his underwear, shoes and socks, until finally, *finally,* he had a naked Hannibal on top of him. He could feel the chest hair against his own relatively smooth chest, and Will’s hand traced down Hannibal’s back, feeling the muscles there.

Hannibal’s own hands were tracing down Will’s side, as he buried his teeth in Will’s neck, biting down.

“Fuck!” Will shouted, not caring how loud he was being. One hand was in Hannibal’s hair, the other gently resting on his back, as he felt Hannibal kissing up his neck, making his way to Will’s mouth.

The kiss was long and deep, both only barely pulling away for air when they required it.

It was slightly crowded in the bed, not fully designed for 2 grown men to accompany it, but that just added to the intimacy, to be honest.

“Have you done this before?” Will asked when they did break for air, feeling Hannibal’s breath on his face.

“No. It has never been a concern of mine, to be completely honest. I am not one for casual intimacy.” Hannibal whispered, breathing heavily. His focus had always been his family, not sexual exploitations.

Will smiled. “I haven’t either.” It was hard to find time for love or sex when even finding something to eat or somewhere to sleep was a struggle. It never even crossed his mind. He still knew the mechanics, though. He’d heard enough stories. “There’s vaseline, by the sink.”

Hannibal caught his meaning, reaching over to grab it without ever leaving the bed. He looked at Will, who just nodded, before opening it and putting some on his fingers.

Will tried not to tense up, he knew what was about to happen, but he was still apprehensive as one of Hannibal's fingers came to rest around his ass.

Hannibal could feel the tension in him. “Breathe, my love.” He leaned down, slowly kissing Will as he pressed one finger in.

Will gasped into the kiss at the intrusion. It felt…odd, but not too uncomfortable if he was being honest.

Hannibal moved his finger, in and out, slowly getting Will used to the feeling. All the while he kept kissing Will, down his neck, his ear, relishing in the little gasps and moans Will was letting out.

"Fuck!" Will shouted as Hannibal brushed up against something inside of him, as a burst of pleasure ignited his nerves. "Ah, fuck."

One finger became two, and soon two fingers became three as Hannibal worked to stretch Will, making sure to brush against his prostate occasionally if only to pull more sounds out of Will.

Will felt like he was going crazy, unable to do much except hold on to Hannibal and gasp. "I'm ready, come on, fuck me." If he waited any longer he was going to come, he knew. And he didn't want to do that yet.

Hannibal wasn’t going to say no to that. He sat back, as much as he could before he ended up hitting his head on the bed frame above him, looking down at Will.

Reaching for the vaseline, Will put some on his fingers, reaching down to coat Hannibal’s cock, and to just feel it in his hand. He was big, and Will said as much.

Hannibal grinned, smug. “You aren’t so bad yourself.” He said, pulling his fingers out of Will, making him whine slightly at the loss. “Are you ready?”

Will nodded, hands reaching to grab the bed frame as he felt Hannibal pushing inside, going slowly, until Will was full. Will had never felt anything like it, he was just so *full.* In the best possible way.

Leaning down, Hannibal pressed a kiss to Will’s cheek, his breath catching. Will was so tight around him, like he was trying to swallow him down. He felt like he couldn’t breathe. “Will…” He breathed into Will’s neck.

Will wrapped his hands around Hannibal’s back, relishing the weight on top of him. “Fuck, baby. You feel so good.” It felt better than good.

Slowly, Hannibal pulled out, not quite all the way, and then pushed back in. He wasn’t sure how long he was going to last, he never wanted it to end.

The bed creaked slightly as Hannibal kept thrusting in and out of Will, slow at first and then building up the pace, until Will scratched down his back.

“Fuck, right there baby.” Will needed Hannibal to do that again, needed him to hit that spot again. He felt slightly bad for the scratches he was marking up Hannibal’s back with, but he also liked it.

The room filled with the sounds of the bed creaking, the moans and occasionally the small whimpers that Will let out whenever Hannibal hit just the right spot, and with Hannibal’s grunts of effort and pleasure.

Will moved a hand down to tug at his own neglected cock, until Hannibal smacked it away, replacing it with his own hand and stroking in time with his thrusts.

Hannibal’s other hand was resting on the mattress by Will’s head, holding him up just barely.

On one particularly hard thrust hitting just the right spot, Will came. His back arched as his cum coated his own stomach and Hannibal’s hand, unable to stop himself from shouting. “Hannibal!”

Hannibal came almost immediately after Will, unable to withstand the sudden tightness, feeling Will come undone underneath him. He thrust one last time as he spilled inside Will, before his hand gave way and he collapsed on top of him.

They both laid there for a few moments, catching their breath and just being together, Hannibal still inside of Wil, before anyone said anything.

Will carded his hand through Hannibal’s hair, taking in his sweaty face, the most relaxed he had ever seen the man. His weight on top of him felt reassuring, welcome. “That was good.”

Hannibal nodded against Will’s chest. He could hear Will’s heart beating in his chest, a fast but steady rhythm. “It was.” He didn’t want to move, didn’t want to leave Will's body.

In a short while, once they had both recovered, they would be able to go again, much slower this time, lazy, almost. With soft words and glances exchanged between them, and all the time in the world.

Before they had to re-emerge into society, eventually.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was supposed to be Hannibal/Will AND Nigel/Adam's first times, but a) it got kinda long, and b) I felt that Spacedogs deserved their own chapter, so that will be next.

Thanks for reading:)

Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

Smut ahead!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Back up on deck, just standing together in the darkness of the night, Nigel and Adam were talking.

Well, Adam was talking. Nigel was listening, as Adam explained basically everything he knew about space and the stars. Nigel didn't mind, not one bit. He loved listening to Adam, and would listen all night if he could.

It was a cold night, freezing in fact, colder than it had ever been on the ship. The cold caused Adam to seek warmth, standing as close to Nigel as he possibly could, leaning into him for his body heat.

There was no one else around, not really. Nigel didn't care, anyway. People could look all they wanted.

"Am I talking too much? Will says I talk too much sometimes when I'm nervous or really excited." Adam looked out across the water as he spoke, noticing how still it was. It felt like he had been talking for hours, he wasn't entirely sure.

"Are you nervous or excited, star?" Nigel asked, eyes on Adam as always. His eyes lit up when he was talking about his interests, and Nigel couldn't get enough of it.

"Both." Adam admitted plainly. He knew by now that Nigel didn't mind his oddities, his straightforward way of speaking, of saying what he thought without hesitation. "I'm nervous because I don't know what will happen in the future, when we get off this ship. I'm excited because I'm with you." He could feel Nigel's body pressing against him.

Nigel smiled, placing a hand around Adam's shoulders, which the boy didn't seem to mind. "Excited how?" He loved Adam's honesty, it was refreshing. So many people seemed to hide how they felt, but not Adam.

Adam swallowed, his nervousness increasing slightly. He had been leaning against Nigel all night, and could very clearly feel how happy Nigel seemed to be right now. The proximity between them was also causing Adam to want more. "Sexually."

Nigel thought his heart would damn near stop beating at Adam's admission, and he certainly stopped breathing, too. Adam seemed so innocent, hearing him be so explicit was a shock to the system. Nigel was speechless for a moment, for once. "You…" He cleared his throat, tried again. "You want to have sex?"

Adam frowned. He was an adult man, of course he wanted to have sex at some point in his life. And he and Nigel had already kissed, so this was the next step. Wasn't it? He looked in Nigel's direction, avoiding eye contact. "I do. Do you?"

Again, Nigel was speechless. This time, he didn't even bother trying to speak, just gently grabbed Adam's face and pulled him in for a kiss. A long, deep, entirely not-appropriate-for-being-in-public-where-anyone-could-see kiss.

Nigel pulled back when he (regretfully) needed to breathe. "Does that answer your question?" He still had his hands on Adam's face, gently caressing his cheeks.

Adam frowned. "How does a kiss equate to whether you want to have sex with me?" A kiss, however pleasant and definitely welcome, wasn't an answer.

Laughing, Nigel kissed him on the forehead. "It means yes, I want to have sex with you." As if he wouldn't - Adam was gorgeous, Nigel wanted nothing more than to find out what was hidden under those clothes.

A noise behind them disturbed the moment, the sound of footsteps on the deck.

Adam looked over Nigel's shoulder, seeing someone else on the deck, watching them and doing a terrible job of hiding it. "There's someone watching us." Adam whispered. He recognised that someone, he was sure of it. "Will and I saw him coming out of your suite earlier."

Nigel turned quickly, having a small suspicion of who it was. Who had just seen them kissing. He spotted the person, confirming his suspicion.

It was Jack Crawford.

"Fuck." Nigel whispered. Jack worked for Bedelia, which automatically made Nigel hate him. He was too nosy for his own good, more a private investigator than a valet, in Nigel's opinion. He was obviously spying on him and Adam. "Let's get out of here, star."

Adam didn't have time to process anything before he felt Nigel take his hand and run, dragging Adam along with him as they ran along the deck, straight past the man who had been watching them, and through a door.

Nigel didn't have a plan when he started to run, only to get away from Jack Crawford, and take Adam along with him for the ride. He didn't entirely know his way around the ship, but kept ducking through doors and down corridors, ignoring all the signs around him, until they reached somewhere a bit more private.

Adam couldn't tell where they were heading, he was too busy trying to stay upright as he ran with Nigel, running had never been his strong suit.

Eventually, they reached the cargo hold, an area they definitely weren't supposed to be in.

Adam stopped when they reached it, bending over slightly with his hands on his knees, trying to catch his breath. "Passengers aren't allowed in here." He said, wheezing slightly.

Nigel looked at him, putting a hand on his back, gently. "We're okay as long as we don't get caught." He looked around the cargo hold, noticing everything in there. Mostly boxes, full of god knows what, Nigel didn't know or care.

There was one thing of interest, however. A car, a brand new and fully assembled car. With seats in the back, and in relative privacy.

Nigel had had one thing on his mind since Adam mentioned sex, and he couldn't wait any longer. Whilst he would have preferred his and Adam's first time to be more comfortable, in a bed maybe, that wasn't possible right now. With Chiyoh and Mischa in the Lecter's suite, and Will and Hannibal in their third class cabin, he was out of bed-related options.

Adam straightened up, having regained his breath. "What are we doing in here?" He asked, glancing around. This ship felt claustrophobic at the best of times, but down here in the cargo hold it felt the opposite - it was all too big. Coupled with this area being out of bounds for passengers, Adam felt uneasy.

"Exploring. Come on, star." Nigel took Adam's hand, gently guiding him towards the car, a 1912 Renault, fully assembled. Ever the gentleman, Nigel opened the door, offering a hand for Adam to get in the back.

Adam was still unsure, but he hadn't ridden in a car before and he was curious, so he followed Nigel's lead, climbing into the back of the car. This was better, he thought. It wasn't so big, so scary.

Nigel jumped in the driver's seat, as Adam pulled the divide down so he could see Nigel.

"Where to, star?" Nigel leaned back, pretending to be Adam's chauffeur, hands on the steering wheel.

Adam leaned through the gap, planting a kiss on Nigel's cheek. "Wherever you are." He whispered, smiling. It was true. He didn't care where they were, as long as he was with Nigel. "Come sit with me." He gently pulled at Nigel, trying to drag him through the divide but not quite managing it.

Nigel crawled into the back, landing on top of Adam, both of them laid down on the seat. God, Adam was gorgeous like this, laid out underneath him.

Adam couldn't help but blush at the way Nigel was looking at him, and although Adam was usually kinda bad at knowing what people were feeling, he could tell how Nigel felt right about now. And he could feel it pressing against him too. "I think…I want to have sex."

Nigel's mouth fell open, a big smile gracing his face. He had thought he'd need to talk Adam into his plan, persuade him gently. But he didn't. He was blushing, too. Nigel hadn't thought he could get any cuter, he was wrong. "I think I do too, gorgeous."

Adam looked away for a moment, a thought coming into his head. "Have you done this before?" Part of him didn't want to know, but another part did. Nigel was so self assured, so confident, it was intimidating. Adam had never done anything, but Nigel seemed like he had.

Nigel nodded, swallowing. "Once or twice." Out of curiosity, as a release. He was only human, after all. But it had never been like this, never anything so...emotional. "Are you disappointed?" He stroked Adam's hair gently.

Adam shook his head, then nodded, unsure. "You're my first. I don't want to disappoint you." He had no idea what to do, how could he? He knew the mechanics, obviously, but that wasn't enough. He couldn't measure up, he knew that. What if he did something wrong? Or he didn't enjoy it? Tears started to well up in his eyes.

"Hey, hey, relax, star." Nigel kissed the top of his head. He could practically see the thoughts swirling around Adam's head like a lightbulb. "You aren't my first, but you'll be my last. You're all I'll ever need." If Adam would let him, Nigel would never leave, nobody else could ever be enough for him anymore. Nigel only wanted to be with Adam for the rest of his life.

Adam smiled, lighting up his whole face. "Okay."

Nigel wasted no time, tugging Adam up, pulling his sweater over his head. The rest of the clothes followed suit, piled up on the floor of the car. Time was of the essence here, at any moment a crew member could come into the cargo hold and they'd be discovered.

Both of them finally naked, they just took in each other for a moment, both admiring each other.

Nigel leaned down to kiss Adam, hands grabbing everything he could on Adam's body, caressing his chest, his hips, his ass.

Adam was doing the same to Nigel, feeling his body heat rolling off him, feeling the muscles in his arms and his back.

Needing air, Nigel pulled back slightly, forehead resting on Adam's. "I don't have any lube with me." He whispered. He hadn't thought he'd need it, to be honest.

Adam knew what it was needed for, Will had given him The Talk when they'd told each other about their sexual preferences. Feeling uncharacteristically bold, he pulled one of Nigel's hands up to his face, sucking 2 fingers into his mouth to get them wet.

Nigel just stared, enraptured by the feel of Adam's tongue on his fingers. Fuck, and Adam had been so nervous beforehand. He was a natural. "That's enough, baby." He regretfully pulled his hand away, eager to get to the next part.

Adam held his breath as he felt Nigel's finger at his ass, carefully and gently pressing in. It felt strange but in a good way. It was still a tiny bit painful, however, and Adam let out a little gasp as the finger pushed all the way in.

Nigel cursed inwardly, hating to see Adam in pain, but he trusted Adam to say if it was too much. Instead, Nigel started kissing down Adam's chest, biting and sucking at one nipple and then other, as he kept stretching Adam out, slowly. A pleasant distraction.

One finger became two, became three, and Adam felt like he was going insane between Nigel paying attention to his nipples so thoroughly, and his fingers gently pressing against his prostate.

The first time Nigel had hit it Adam had squeezed him with his legs so hard he couldn't breathe for a moment.

"Nigel, please." Adam gasped. He needed Nigel in him, now.

Nigel couldn't deny his star, and he pulled his fingers out, taking a deep breath to steady himself before he lined up his dick and slowly, gently pushed into Adam.

Adam couldn't keep quiet, small gasps and little whimpers escaping him even as Nigel leaned down to kiss him. He just felt so full, so close to Nigel right now. It felt amazing.

Nigel almost couldn't breathe, Adam was so tight around him. It was almost beyond words, and he was already regretting that they couldn't stay like this forever.

Eventually, Nigel began to move, thrusting gently into Adam, hitting that sweet spot inside of him that made Adam let out the most wonderful mewls, unable to keep quiet at all.

Neither of them lasted long, but it was perfect regardless, just the two of them being so close, being together in this moment.

The windows steamed up from their breathing, making both of them sweat profusely, but Adam didn't care. He felt Nigel's thumb stroke along his neck and he was gone, his orgasm washing over him as he clenched around Nigel and arched his back slightly, sighing Nigel's name as he did so.

Nigel couldn't hold out any longer, spilling inside Adam immediately after, collapsing on top of him as his arms couldn't hold him up any longer. "Fuck."

They kissed, lazily, neither one of them in a hurry to move.

Eventually they got dressed, both of them sweaty and sticky because of the previous events, and hand in hand they made their way out of the cargo hold, leaning against each other.

The only sign that they had been there was a handprint in the steamed up windows of the car.

***

On deck, the night had turned chilly. A few people were around, but it was late at night, and most people were asleep in their cabins.

It was a quiet night, for the most part, until 3 bells rang out from the crows nest, and the telephone in the bridge rang out, to be answered by the sixth officer.

"Iceberg right ahead!"

Chapter End Notes

If you'd like this story to have a perfectly happy ending, I would recommend stopping here, and ignoring the last paragraph. Titanic doesn't sink, and everyone lives happily ever after.

Please heed the tags from here on out!

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

> OK, so Im a bit of a Titanic geek (if that isn't obvious) so I have tried to make this as accurate as I can, to the film and to real life. But there's only so much I can do, so some timelines might be off in regards to the sinking. I did the best I could.

It was inevitable. Despite all efforts from the crew, the Titanic collided with the iceberg, causing the ship to shake and judder from the impact. Ice from the iceberg scattered the deck, the engines were stopped on the Captain's orders, and the watertight doors were closed. From this moment on, the Titanic's fate was sealed.

In first class, Beverley opened the door to her suite, having noticed that the engines had stopped, looking out into the hallway as a steward went past.

Her neighbour, a young woman who she couldn't remember the name of, stopped the steward to inquire about the engines. He reassured her that they had likely thrown a propeller blade, and there was no cause for alarm. Bev noticed the ship's designer, Mr Andrews, walked past with a collection of rolled up plans under his arm - that wasn't good.

Will and Hannibal were already back on their deck, heading straight for the Lecter's room, wondering why Jack Crawford was standing outside. They had been holding hands, but dropped them when they realised Jack was there.

When they entered, they discovered why Jack was outside - Bedelia was there, standing in front of the safe.

On deck, Adam and Nigel had seen the iceberg go past, narrowly avoiding the ice scattered on deck, clinging to each other before heading back to the Lecter's suite, Adam wearing Nigel's coat to fend off the chill in the air.

They passed Jack Crawford as they entered, neither of them noticing him slip something into the pocket of Adam's coat.

Inside the room, everyone was awake. Chiyoh stood with Mischa behind her, as if physically protecting her from Bedelia. "You have no right to be in here."

"I have the right to see to my own property." Bedelia said, the safe having been opened before Will and Hannibal had arrived.

"What's going on here?" Hannibal asked, already knowing that Bedelia was up to no good. She hated that safe, that's why it wasn't in her room. She had never once had use of it the entire voyage, why should she start now?

“I woke up to Bedelia banging on the door, whilst Mischa and myself were sleeping.” Chiyoh answered, narrowing her eyes at Bedelia. “I opened the door and she barged in, heading straight for the safe. Apparently the diamond is missing, so Jack got a passing steward to fetch the Master at arms.” It was clear from Chiyoh’s tone that she didn’t believe a single word that Bedelia had said, including the ‘shock’ of finding the diamond missing.

It was at that moment that Nigel and Adam walked in, Adam immediately going to stand by Will as Nigel went to pick Mischa up, holding her tightly. They had heard everything Chiyoh had said, but missed the small nod Jack Crawford sent Bedelia’s way.

“What gives you the fucking right to come in here in the middle of the night?” Nigel was trying to control how he felt about Bedelia, but this was a big invasion of privacy in his eyes. Like Chiyoh, he was suspicious.

Will and Adam stood to the side, trying to be as invisible as possible, feeling awkward at the events unfolding. Will could feel the tension in the room, and could tell something wasn’t right. Bedelia wasn’t worried about her diamond - there was an air of smugness around her.

“Nobody has been in the safe except myself, Bedelia.” Hannibal still had his sketchbook under his arm, protecting the drawing of Will that had been merely hours before. He placed it on the sofa, out of the way. “Only you and I know the combination.” Even Nigel didn’t know. In his own words, he ‘didn’t fucking care what was in the stupid safe.’

Bedelia crossed her arms in front of her chest. “Now that you have returned I suspect I know where the diamond has gone.” She fixed her gaze on Will and Adam.

The Master at arms arrived, a few officers with him, having been informed that Miss Du Maurier had been robbed. “I was informed there had been a robbery, Miss.”

Bedelia had poured herself a drink from the decanter on a side table, and she took a sip before explaining. “My blue diamond necklace has gone missing from this safe. I believe it’s the doings of the third class passengers standing over there.” She couldn’t have used their names if she wanted to - she couldn’t really remember them.

“We haven’t even been in here!” Will said, moving Adam behind him. He knew what this was now, and he’d be damned if Bedelia got away with it.

Adam was confused. He hadn’t been in the safe, and neither had Will. They had no need to, so why was Bedelia lying about it? He felt his heart rate pick up, not entirely sure where any of this was going.

“Search them.” The master at arms nodded to his officers, who went straight to Will and Adam, manhandling them and searching them.

Nigel could see the distress in Adam’s eyes, but he knew they wouldn’t find anything. “Adam has been with me all night.” He looked at Jack Crawford, knowing he could confirm it. Nigel also knew that Jack wouldn’t help, he just cared about the money. Bedelia’s money, in this case. Nigel handed Mischa off to Chiyoh, half asleep.

Will stood there, powerless, as he and Adam were searched. He knew he could handle being touched by strangers, even if they did seem to be a bit more rough than they were meant to be, but Adam wouldn't do too well.

All Adam could feel was the too-rough hands, patting him down, checking his pockets and he felt like he couldn't breathe. This was too much, a lot had already happened tonight and this was just too overwhelming for him. He could feel the tears start to build up. He hadn't done anything, why was this happening?

One of the officers pulled a necklace out of the pocket of Adam's coat, holding it up for all to see. "Is this what you are looking for, miss?" He asked.

All heads turned to the necklace, as Bedelia nodded.

The master at arms wanted no time, instructing the officer to cuff Adam's hands behind his back, and suddenly everything was just too much for him. The handcuffs hurt, he hadn't taken the necklace, and what was going to happen now? He couldn't even speak to defend himself, but he didn't need to.

"This is bullshit!" Will shouted, turning to Bedelia. "Adam didn't do anything, this is all you." Another officer was holding Will by the arm, stopping him from lashing out.

Nigel looked at Hannibal - one glance was all it took to know they were on the same page. "That's my jacket, Adam didn't fucking do anything!" He tried to remain calm, but when Adam was being arrested it was kinda hard to do.

Bedelia just smiled, taking a sip of her drink. Her plan had worked. She watched as Jack Crawford took the necklace, placing it back in its box in the safe, before closing the safe itself.

"You planted it on him!" Will shouted at Jack, putting several things together at once - Jack worked for Bedelia, Will had seen him leaving the room a short while ago, and he had been by the door when he and Hannibal got there. It was the only explanation.

Hannibal hadn't said anything yet. "Bedelia, Adam and Will have been with us all night, and they don't know the combination for the safe." He knew Adam hadn't done it - he hadn't even known there was a diamond in there to begin with.

The Master at arms had heard enough. The necklace was in the jacket, that was enough proof for him. "That's enough. Mr Crawford, if you would help me transport the thief to my office to be detained. Steward, take the other third class passenger down to the third class rooms, where he is supposed to be."

Will couldn't do anything but watch as Jack grabbed Adam by the arm, roughly shoving him out of the room and down the hallway, Adam silent and frozen the entire time. Will knew this was bad, and fought as he himself was dragged out of the room by the steward, the other occupants of the room unable to do anything but watch.

Moving quickly, Hannibal grabbed Bedelia by the arm, slamming her into the wall. He didn't like to be violent, that was more Nigel's area of expertise, but a line had been crossed here. "Why?"

Bedelia gasped at the slightly rough treatment from her fiance. "I know what you are. What you all are. I refuse to let some steerage passengers ruin my inheritance."

"You're ruining your own inheritance, Bedelia." Hannibal said. "When we get off this ship at New York, we're leaving with Adam and Will." Because they would get Adam out of this, he was sure. That was also if Adam and Will wanted anything to do with them after all of this.

"In other words, the wedding's off." Nigel couldn't contain his smile, despite the situation. He had always hated Bedelia, now he had a reason to. "Now fuck off, please." He was barely handling his rage, just about.

Hannibal let go of Bedelia, who stumbled towards the door, slamming it shut behind her.

"Bye bye." Mischa whispered, making Chiyoh smile. Everyone was glad to see the back of Bedelia, it seemed.

Now all they needed to do was find Will and rescue Adam.

***

Will was practically dragged all the way back to the third class deck, and told in no uncertain terms to 'stay where he was supposed to' by the steward.

Will had no intention of doing that. Adam needed him, and judging by the way the ship's engines had stopped, something had gone very wrong. He didn't have a plan, there was no time for that. All he knew was that he needed to find Adam, now.

***

In the office of the Master at arms, Adam was handcuffed to the pipe. The cuffs hurt his wrists, they didn't feel right, and every time he shifted even a little bit they rattled.

Jack Crawford stood watching him. He wasn't supposed to be down here, not anymore. But he couldn't help but watch the scared, shaking boy for a bit longer. "You know, the master at arms told me they've started to lower the lifeboats, since the ship hit an iceberg. The Titanic may very well sink."

Adam watched Jack Crawford leave the room, a small smile on the man's face.

Adam was alone down here, far down in the ship. He didn't know where anyone was, if anyone would be coming to look for him. He knew Will would try, but what if he couldn't? Would he be stuck down here?

What about Nigel? Tonight had been so good before all this happened, and he longed to be back in that car with Nigel, longed to be that close to him again.

If the lifeboats were being lowered, that meant they were evacuating passengers. They had hit an iceberg, Adam had seen it on deck with Nigel. If the ship really was sinking, would anyone come for Adam?

Tears welled up in his eyes again, the thought of being stuck down here. He was trapped, the handcuffs wouldn't move and he was stuck down here. If no one came for him, Adam would die down here, he knew it. Because she was sinking, he could feel it. The slight list to the ship, the waterline beginning to rise above the window he was handcuffed near.

He couldn't even sit down, and Adam was tired. So very tired. He banged his head gently against the pipe he was cuffed to, an old habit that Will had managed to get rid of, instead getting Adam to hit his head against a pillow or a cushion instead.

But Will wasn't here, and Adam couldn't cope, couldn't do anything. And banging his head did nothing except make his head hurt, so he stopped, letting the tears roll down his cheeks as he whispered his brother's name, as if he could summon him. "Will."

Adam could do nothing except wait.

Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

The timeline is probably a bit off, but it doesn't really matter tbh.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Nigel's immediate instinct was to find Adam, right now. Consequences be damned. He knew Adam would be scared, wherever they had taken him, and he couldn't stand the thought of his Adam being so scared and alone down there. "Han.."

"I know." Hannibal knew what Nigel was thinking, the way he always had. "I never thought Bedelia would stoop so low." This was his fault, he thought. Adam and Will would have been better off never meeting them, now everything was ruined.

"What's happening?" Mischa whispered to Chiyoh, who was still cradling the girl in her arms.

Chiyoh kissed her on the forehead, gently. "Your brothers are going to find Adam and Will." She fixed the brothers with a look that made it clear that if they didn't, she would. She had grown fond of the boys, if how happy they made Nigel and Hannibal.

There was a knock at the door, and a steward came in unprompted, standing just inside the room. "Excuse me Mr Lecter, but I've been told to inform you to put on your life belts and come up to the boat deck."

Hannibal and Nigel glanced at each other, as Mischa clung to Chiyoh. This wasn't good. They watched as the steward went to the wardrobe, pulling down the life belts that were stored in there.

"It's the Captain's orders. I would advise you to dress warmly, it's rather cold out." Without another word, he left, moving on to the next suite.

"Mischa, I want you to go and get dressed, quick as you can, okay? Dress warmly. You can bring your teddy bear, too." Chiyoh put her down, watching as the little girl did as she was told.

Hannibal and Nigel looked to Chiyoh, realising the same thing as her a few seconds later. Life belts and going up to the deck, at this time of night was more than just a precaution. They both had felt the ship collide with something, if they were putting people into the lifeboats, then it would be women and children first.

Hannibal stood next to his brother, putting a reassuring hand on his shoulder. “We need to get on deck, Mischa and Chiyoh are our priority right now, Nigel.” Will would find Adam, he was sure of it. They couldn’t do anything else without finding out what in the hell was going on, and they needed to get on deck.

“I’m not leaving Adam.” Nigel said, his voice thick with emotion. It was his fault, all of this. Now Adam was alone, and probably scared, all because of Nigel.

He looked to the side, where Mischa now stood, wearing her favourite dress, a warm coat and carrying her treasured teddy bear with her, a remnant from their past life in Lithuania. He realised Hannibal was right, as always. He nodded, agreeing that Mischa was the priority. Will would find Adam.

Chiyoh had gotten the life jackets ready, having put one on herself as she gave one each to Hannibal and Nigel with a pointed look, as if to say *set a good example for your sister,* before helping Mischa into hers.

Hannibal picked Mischa up, hugging her tightly. “We’re going to go up on deck now, find out what’s going on. I need you to stay with Chiyoh no matter what, okay? She’ll look after you.” He kissed her on the forehead, before passing her to Nigel.

“Come on, sweetheart, let’s go.” Nigel carried her out of the room, Hannibal and Chiyoh following behind as they began to make their way to the deck.

***

Down below, in third class, it was chaos. Stewards had woken up third class passengers, with a quick shout to put their life belts on, and no further explanations. Foreign passengers stood with dictionaries in hand, trying to find their way up to the deck amidst the confusion. Water had already started seeping into the lowest third class deck, causing more panic.

Will was determined. He ignored everyone else, fighting his way through as he tried to remember his way out. The easiest way to find Adam would probably be to go up to the third class deck, slip into first class amidst the chaos, and then hopefully find a crew member who could help.

Which is what he did, not once letting the panic that was threatening to overwhelm him take over. Ignoring the small voice in his head that said he might never find Adam, that he’d failed as a brother, that Adam would be alone, trapped down there during all of this chaos. Will fought his way to the top deck, heart racing and breathing heavily, taking in the scene before him.

They were lowering the lifeboats. One had already rowed away from the ship, and others were being loaded as Will stood there.

Fuck.

They wouldn’t lower the lifeboats for no reason, not in the middle of a freezing cold night like this. The ship was tilting, too, it wasn’t too noticeable right now, but it was there, Will

could feel it.

He needed to find Adam, now.

Will raced towards the first crew member he could see that wasn't preoccupied with the lifeboats. "Excuse me, hey!"

The crew member turned around, slightly startled.

"Where would the master at arms take someone under arrest? Please, I need to find my brother." Will was desperate, not above begging at a time like this. He didn't have any time to waste, dammit.

The crew member listed off a few directions, and Will cursed inwardly when he realised he'd have to go back down a few decks. With a quick thank you, Will raced off, following the directions in the hope of finding Adam as quickly as he could.

***

The Lecter's stood on the stairs, trying to make their way up to the deck. It was busy, with a few gentlemen sitting down, and a few passengers complaining about all the fuss, not knowing the gravity of the situation. The band was playing music, hoping to lighten the atmosphere slightly.

Chiyoh had noticed a man walking around, and vaguely recognised him from the newspapers - Mr Andrews, the designer of the Titanic. He was looking around, seeing all the people who were waiting for the lifeboats.

"Excuse me, Mr Andrews?" She approached him carefully, feeling that he would be able to answer the main question on her mind. She liked having all the facts, now more than ever.

He turned, noticing Chiyoh. He had seen her around a few times, and knew she was travelling first class.

"We still aren't entirely sure what is happening, here. The stewards have told us to come up to the boat deck, but there seems to be some confusion. Could you tell me the truth, please?" She needed to know, needed the facts. That way she could protect Mischa, at the very least.

Mr Andrews looked at her, looking behind her to Hannibal, Nigel, and Mischa. His eyes softened slightly, and he took Chiyoh aside, away from the other passengers milling around. Panic wouldn't do anyone any good. "The ship will sink, in an hour or two, at most. You need to get into a lifeboat, do you understand? There aren't enough lifeboats." With one squeeze of Chiyoh's hand, he walked away, hoping to help in any way possible.

Chiyoh stood for a moment, as it sank in. Half the people on this ship were going to die. They had to get up to the boat deck, fast.

***

The deck was busy, but not as busy as it could have been, at least for first class passengers. Many of them had decided to wait inside, stating it was too cold to be hanging around.

The Lecters made their way to the deck, Nigel holding tightly to Mischa as they walked towards the nearest lifeboat that was being filled.

Chiyoh had relayed what Mr Andrews had told her to Hannibal, not letting Mischa hear. They both knew what it meant, for them and for everyone else.

“Women and children, please!” An officer shouted, helping first class passengers into the boat, physically pushing away a few men who tried.

Beverly stood by the lifeboat, giving her husband one last hug and kiss before they tearfully parted, and she stepped into the boat.

“Mischa, you and Chiyoh are going into the lifeboat, okay? I need you to be good for Chiyoh, like always.” Nigel looked at his little sister, trying not to let his own fear show.

Mischa nodded, before throwing her arms around Nigel’s neck, one last hug. For now. “Aš tave myliu.” She said, reverting back to their native language. *I love you*.

Nigel swallowed past the lump in his throat. “Aš tave myliu, sweetheart. Always.” He kissed her on the cheek, squeezing her one last time before handing her to Hannibal.

“We’ll see you soon, okay? There’ll be another lifeboat for us, don’t worry.” Hannibal squeezed her, feeling better knowing she’d be safe with Chiyoh. “Aš tave myliu.”

Mischa nodded, resting her head on Hannibal’s shoulder as she repeated it back. “Aš tave myliu.”

Chiyoh was saying a temporary goodbye to Nigel as Hannibal held on to their sister. “I’ll look after her, I promise. Be safe.” Chiyoh was not one for physical affection unless it was Mischa, but she allowed herself to briefly hug Nigel, feeling the need to.

“Thank you.” Nigel whispered to her, hugging her back. They were lucky to have Chiyoh, he knew that.

Hannibal stepped closer to the lifeboat, gently handing Mischa over to Beverley, who placed the little girl in her lap. Mischa didn’t take her eyes off her brothers the entire time, squeezing her teddy bear tightly.

“You’re getting a bit big to sit on my lap, young lady.” Bev smiled, squeezing Mischa lightly. She watched her husband, where he stood on deck, smiling sadly at him. She would see him again, she needed to think that.

“Don’t worry about Mischa, find Adam and Will.” Chiyoh said as she hugged Hannibal, for what could be the last time, she realised. She put the thoughts out of her mind, telling herself this was a temporary goodbye. She had to be strong for Mischa.

“We will. Go, we’ll be fine.” Hannibal replied, nodding at her. He tried not to think of what might have transpired next time he would see her, tried to push it out of his mind entirely. Mischa and Chiyoh would be safe, that’s what mattered.

Chiyoh stepped into the lifeboat, the last passenger to get on board, taking a seat beside Beverley and Mischa. There was a sombre air in the lifeboat, as the women waved goodbye to their men, as they escaped the chaos of the ship.

Nigel and Hannibal watched as the lifeboat was lowered, waving to Chiyoh and Mischa as it did, not wanting to move just yet. They stood side by side, hand in hand, both holding back their emotions.

Mischa waved from the lifeboat at her brothers, and her mind briefly flashed back to Lithuania, to that night. She knew she was okay then, because she had had her brothers with her. But now she had Chiyoh at least, and Nigel and Han would find another lifeboat, she was hopeful.

It didn’t make it any easier, for any of them.

***

Water had started rushing in, startling Adam out of his own thoughts as panic took over. He was still chained to the pipe. Nobody had come for him yet, he was still alone down here.

The waterline had covered the porthole completely, so Adam had turned his back to it. He had watched as a few of the first lifeboats rowed away, but now there was only water, a reminder of his situation.

The water was rising, rapidly. Adam rattled his handcuffs, hoping they might break so at least he wouldn’t be trapped, left to drown. They didn’t break.

The water was still coming in, up to Adam’s knees now. Adam was frozen with fear, with the thought that he’d be stuck down here as the water rose and rose.

The water wasn’t even up to his waist yet, but Adam felt like he couldn’t breathe. He couldn’t move, couldn’t think, he was stuck. He couldn’t even shout, the fear and panic overtaking him entirely.

He didn’t want to die down here. He didn’t want to die all alone, cold and trapped down here. He didn’t want to leave Will, he couldn’t leave Will on his own. He couldn’t. He needed to get out of here but he couldn’t shout for help, he couldn’t think, he couldn't -

“Adam!”

Adam lifted his head slightly from where he had rested it on the pipe he was chained to, not entirely sure what he had heard. There was no one else down here, no one had gone past.

“Adam!”

It was closer this time, Adam could hear it clearer now. That was his name, he realised slowly, there was someone here.

“Adam!”

“Hello?” Adam shouted back, as loud as he could. His voice was quiet, even as he shouted, the cold of the water getting to him. The handcuffs rattled, and he rattled them again on purpose, adding more noise.

There was splashing outside, and suddenly Will was in the doorway. “Adam.” He breathed in relief, wading through the water towards his twin, holding him close and kissing him on the forehead.

Will could have sworn his heart stopped beating when he saw Adam, chained to a pipe and shivering slightly. He looked so small at that moment, like he’d given up all hope.

Adam cried as Will embraced him, wanting to hug him back but he was still cuffed. “I wasn’t sure you’d come for me.” He whispered. He knew deep down that Will wouldn’t leave him, he never had, but there had still been that small voice in the back of his mind.

“Never.” Will said, hands on either side of Adam’s face. “I’m never leaving you, you got that? Now, I need to find some help, something to break these handcuffs, okay?”

Adam nodded, wishing desperately that the cuffs were gone. His wrists had gone red, and they hurt. The water was still rising, up to Adam’s waist now, and he was still terrified. Still trapped.

Will hated to leave Adam again, now that he’d just found him, but he needed help. Someone with a key, or maybe an axe, anything as long as it got Adam free. He waded out into the corridor, going back the way he had come.

There had to be something, anything, he thought as he looked, going up some stairs, through a few more corridors.

There was nothing. There was no one around, it was eerie.

Will found an emergency axe on the wall, encased in glass, and figured it would do. He couldn’t leave Adam any longer, they needed to get up on deck, as soon as they could.

He got back to the corridor where the stairs were, surprised to see 2 men walking towards the stairs, down into the ship. The opposite way of everyone else.

“Hannibal?” Will asked, running up to them. He’d recognised those well-tailored suits anywhere.

Hannibal turned, taking Will into his arms, mindful of the axe, and kissed him. “I thought I might not see you again.” There were a lot of ways this could have gone, and Hannibal had been thinking the worst.

“Where’s Adam?” Nigel asked, feeling slightly envious of seeing Hannibal and Will together. He and Hannibal had come to find Adam, having asked a crewman where he might have been.

“Down here, follow me.” Wild descended the stairs, desperate to get back to his twin, and Hannibal and Nigel followed.

The water had risen, enough that they had to actually swim through it, because they couldn’t walk like Will had done before.

Soon enough, they reached where Adam was, and Nigel raced through the water towards him, holding him close and kissing him, desperately.

“I didn’t do it Nigel, I didn’t take the necklace.” Adam whispered, for once meeting Nigel’s eyes. He needed Nigel to know the truth, know that he wasn’t a thief.

“I know, star, I know.” Nigel stroked Adam’s hair gently, unwilling to part from him for even a second. “I love you, you know that, right?” He thought Adam had been lost, stuck down here. He needed Adam to know he loved him.

“I know. I love you too.” Adam replied, whimpering as the ship creaked, loudly. A reminder of their current situation.

In no time at all, Will (who thankfully already knew how to wield an axe properly) had brought the axe down on the handcuffs, at last freeing Adam from his bonds.

Adam and Will hugged briefly, before the four of them made their way out of the room. The water was still rising, and time was of the essence.

They went back the way they had come, staying close to each other at all times, not willing to be parted again. The lights went out briefly, plunging them into darkness, before returning just as quickly as they had gone off.

All four of them reached dry ground, making it to a deck that wasn’t quite underwater yet, and stopped to breathe and just be with each other for a moment. The short journey had tired them out slightly, and there was still a long night ahead.

They were on one of the first class decks, judging by the decor. They could rest for a moment, they all needed it. The corridor was empty.

Hannibal sat on the floor, pulling Will down on his lap. “I must apologise for Bedelia. Her behaviour is inexcusable.” Seeing the water so high, knowing that anything could have happened to Will and Adam down there, it was scary.

Will laughed gently. The ship was sinking, and Hannibal was apologising. Of course he was. With any luck, Bedelia would fall overboard. He refused to feel guilty for that thought - she’d had Adam arrested. “It doesn’t matter. We’re all here, that’s what matters. Where’s Mischa?”

“With Chiyoh and Beverly in a lifeboat, safe.” Even as he faced his own mortality, Will was thinking of Mischa. “There might still be a lifeboat for us.” Hannibal kissed him, hands

settling on his waist.

Will kissed him back, uncaring if anyone saw. There were bigger problems right now. “There might be.” He doubted it. But he needed to have some hope, or he would have nothing. “I love you.”

“I love you too.” Hannibal kissed him again, needing it.

Next to them, Nigel was sitting on the floor with Adam curled up against him. “I should have come for you sooner.” He should have fought the officers, not let Adam be taken away in the first place.

“You’re here now, that’s all that matters. Thank you.” Adam pulled Nigel into a kiss, long and meaningful. He never wanted to be parted from Nigel again. He had calmed down now, come back to himself.

Nigel smiled into the kiss, happy to have Adam back by his side, where he belonged.

They needed to get up on deck, get away from the ship, find a lifeboat if they could. But for now, they could just be together, for a few moments more.

***

Out in the lifeboat, Mischa watched as the distress signals went up, holding tight to her teddy bear. Her brothers were on that ship, she realised. Will and Adam, too. They were still lowering lifeboats, hopefully they had boarded one. She clung to the thought, needing it to be true.

Beverley watched, knowing her husband was still on that ship. Knowing hundreds of people were still on that ship.

Chiyoh watched, one hand holding tight to Beverleys hand, knowing she could do nothing. For the first time in her life, she felt helpless.

The Titanic was going down, one end slowly sinking into the ocean, lifeboats milling around here and trying to get away. It was a harrowing sight, for all in the lifeboats.

All they could do was watch, and wait.

Chapter End Notes

There are 2 endings to this fic! The next 6 chapters are the original, planned and proper ending - this is where the MCD tag comes in.

BUT! If you would like a quicker, not fully planned out but death free and happier ending, then go from here to Chapter 21! Where the ending is a lot quicker but also happier.

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

Major Character Death applies in this chapter, just to warn you.

...(my apologies)

Mischa watched the Titanic from her lifeboat, squeezing the life out of her teddy bear. They had rowed away from the ship, far enough away that the crewman said they wouldn't be pulled under when the Titanic went down, but still close enough to see. The lights were still on, the only way to see what was happening.

She couldn't take her eyes off it, not knowing that her brothers might still be on board. They had said they would find another lifeboat, but she'd overheard another passenger on this lifeboat whisper that there weren't enough lifeboats, and the ones Mischa could see didn't look full.

What if they didn't get on a lifeboat?

Chiyoh had found herself leaning against Beverly slightly, tired even though the night was far from over. Everything was so uncertain, so unknown, and Chiyoh found all the variables weighing on her mind. She had no idea what the rest of the night would hold in store, and it would be hours before help arrived, if there was any on the way.

Beverly turned her thoughts away from the ship, away from her husband who was still on board. There was nothing she could do now. She took to asking Mischa about her teddy bear, hoping to distract her slightly.

It was going to be a long night.

***

Just below deck, Nigel was unfastening his life jacket, tying it around Adam instead, ignoring his protestations. "I'll be fine, star." He needed Adam to wear it, needed to know that Adam would have some protection at the very least, for his own peace of mind.

"I can swim, Nigel. It would make more sense to find another one, so we both have a life jacket." Nigel giving him his own jacket made no sense, they were both in the same amount of danger. Nigel needed one too.

“I’ll find one when we get on deck, star, okay?” Nigel kissed him on the forehead, holding him closely.

“Hannibal don’t you fucking dare.” Will gave him a pointed look, knowing Hannibal was about to offer his own life jacket. While he knew a life jacket would be beneficial he would feel bad taking Hannibal’s.

Hannibal sighed, holding Will close. “We should try and get to a lifeboat.” If there were any left. Part of him wanted to stay down here with Will, in their own world. But the ship was sinking, so that wasn’t feasible. Once they left here, reality would sink in.

Both couples had had their small reunion, a few moments together before everything went to shit. Now, escape and survival had to be the priority.

“Whatever happens, I’ll find you.” Nigel said, looking Adam in the eyes. He held no illusions about what was going to happen, what would have happened by the time this night was over. He hugged Adam to him, not wanting to let go.

Adam hummed in agreement. “I know you will.” His mind was strangely calm, likely because he was in Nigel’s arms. But he didn’t know what would happen next, how the night would play out. It scared him to death.

Hannibal made the same promise to Will, kissing him before taking his hand, leading the way through the ship.

They walked through the first class dining room, walked past the table where they had all sat, the night after they met. How things had changed, strange to think it had only been a few days ago.

On deck, the band was still playing, people were running around, frantically trying to find a lifeboat or something to cling to in the water. Someone was praying out loud, and the collapsible lifeboats were still being lowered. Distress rockets were being fired, briefly lighting up the sky.

The four of them walked onto the deck, and Adam felt the reality of what was happening sink in. Water was already starting to rush up over the bow.

“Come on, the stern is our best bet.” Will grabbed his brother's hand, squeezing tightly. If they could stay on the ship as long as possible, they wouldn’t be in the water for as long. It was either that or jump off the side, but both options ended with being in the freezing cold water. Best to delay it.

Everyone else had had the same idea, judging by the crowds of people rushing up towards the stern. It was hard, as the ship was now on an incline, due to the bow sinking faster.

Will, Adam, Hannibal and Nigel all made their way towards the stern, pushing through the other passengers. It was chaotic, with people heading the same direction, or jumping off the side, throwing furniture and other things off to use as floatation devices.

They couldn't keep up with each other in the crowds of people, and before anybody realised, Will and Adam had become separated from Nigel and Hannibal in the panic.

Will's mind didn't have room to panic right now, his only priority was making sure Adam was with him, and safe. He held on tightly to his brother, squeezing his hand so hard it was almost painful. He looked over at his brother, briefly wishing he had lost that stupid poker game. Then Adam wouldn't be in danger, they'd be safe and sound in England.

But he couldn't change that now.

Adam's mind was racing, everything was too overwhelming. There were too many people around, it was too loud, everything was just too much to handle. The life jacket was heavy, surprisingly, and he couldn't focus on anything except Will's hand in his. Whatever happened, he had his brother at the very least.

Adam turned to look behind them quickly, and noticed that Hannibal and Nigel were nowhere to be seen. Nigel had promised to find him, so he held onto that, in his mind. Something to focus on.

They were pushing their way through the throngs of people who had also had the same idea, shoving and pushing their way to the stern, fighting against the tilt of the ship.

They reached a railing, and Will grabbed hold of Adam, helping him to jump over the railing to the deck below, before following suit.

Adam landed hard, on his knees, the pain managing to cut through the faint fog in his mind. He felt a hand help him get to his feet.

"There you go, lad." The man said, helping Adam up before the poor boy ended up getting trampled.

Will landed behind Adam, a bit more gracefully, and grabbed hold of Adam's hand, putting him in front as they fought their way through even more people, up to the stairs, getting stuck behind someone quoting the Bible.

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." The man mumbled holding tightly to both railings.

"You wanna walk a bit faster there?" Somebody behind Will shouted, physically pushing everyone on the stairs forward to get moving a bit faster.

Will and Adam pushed forward, finally reaching the stern, walking past a reverend giving one final sermon, a small comfort for those who held on to him even as the ship's stern began to lift into the air.

"Come on, Adam." Will held tightly to his twin's hand, helping him up as they fought against the incline of the ship, reaching the railings eventually. Will grabbed hold of the railing, his other arm tightly around Adam.

Adam clung to his older brother, one hand also holding the railing, as the stern began to rise out of the water. His heart rate picked up, almost as if it would beat out of his chest. He had never been so scared in his life, but as long as he had Will, he was okay.

People were jumping over the railings, landing into the freezing cold water below, whilst others lost their footing, sliding down the ship. There was screaming, crying, shouting, the noise of a thousand panic stricken and scared people, all facing the same fate.

Will held on tight to his brother, panic finally setting in. This could be it, he realised. He might never see Hannibal again, he and Adam might never reach America like they had planned. He had failed, in his promise to keep Adam safe, to always look after him.

But there was nothing he could do now.

***

Nigel had lost track of Adam amongst the chaos, and knew that Will would look after him. That they would be safe, somehow.

He held tightly to Hannibal's hand, their only tie to each other, as they tried to get through. But it was too hectic, too many people jumping and objects being thrown into the sea,

Nigel tripped, landing on the deck on his front, and he could feel as his hand slipped out of Hannibal's, as people stumbled over him, not giving him chance to get up.

He could feel the people above him, walking over him, as the crowd pushed forward unaware of the person under their feet.

Nigel's last thought was of Adam, saying he knew he would find him, as he struggled and failed to get up, before everything went dark.

***

There were too many people, Hannibal thought, too many panicked and rushed people fighting their way through the ship, even as she creaked and groaned. The ship didn't have long left.

Nigel was by his side, pushing through the crowd, holding his hand like a lifeline, until suddenly it was gone.

"Nigel!" Hannibal shouted, even though he doubted he'd be heard in the noise of the crowds. He stopped, looking around for his twin out of desperation, moving to the side to stand by a wall, hoping to see Nigel anywhere.

He couldn't see Nigel at all, and he knew Nigel wouldn't let go of his hand, not for any reason. There were so many people around, people kept tripping up and falling over.

He looked down, noticed someone lying on the floor, recognised his brother's ashy blonde hair, and Hannibal felt his heart break.

He raced forwards towards the body, carefully turning it over to see a mirror image of his own face looking back at him. Nigel. He dragged it over to a corner, out of the way of the crowds.

He slapped Nigel's face gently, then checked for breathing, hoping Nigel would open his eyes and they'd find their way out of this together. "Nigel, wake up." He pleaded, even as he knew what had already happened.

Hannibal felt a tear drip down his cheek, as Nigel remained unresponsive. "Nigel, please." He whispered. This couldn't be happening, they were supposed to be by each other's side, always. To be there for Mischa, to be a family. "Don't leave me." His voice broke, reality setting in.

Nigel didn't wake up. He never would.

The crowd had trampled him, so stuck in their own panic and desperation that they hadn't noticed the body beneath their feet.

Hannibal watched as the water continued to rise above the bow, slowly approaching where he was. He didn't want to leave Nigel, he couldn't leave his other half, but he had to. He needed to be there for Mischa and Chiyoh, for Will and Adam, he had to go on. Without Nigel. For the first time in his life he was truly alone, without his twin by his side.

"I'm sorry." He whispered, leaning down to kiss his brother on the forehead one last time. The water had almost reached him, and Hannibal carried his brother over to the railing, just barely staying upright, saying one final goodbye as he let go, letting the ocean claim Nigel's body.

***

The reverend stood, holding on tightly to those who needed to hear what comforts they could, as the stern continued to rise further and further into the air. "He shall wipe away all the tears from their eyes. And there shall be no more death. Neither shall there be sorrow or crying. Neither shall there be any more pain. For the former world has passed away."

Chapter 16

Water was rushing up over the bow of the ship, faster and faster, causing the people to panic. The water was forcing the bow further down into the ocean, causing the stern to slowly rise.

From the lifeboats, the passengers could hear more than they could see what was happening. It was the middle of the night, with no visible moon to light the way. The only light out there in the middle of the ocean was from the Titanic herself, and even that wouldn't last forever.

In Mischa's lifeboat, they had stopped rowing, all of them unable to tear their eyes away from the scene in front of them. How could they? Their loved ones, their husbands and brothers, their friends and family were still onboard.

Mischa felt as if she owed it to her brothers, almost, to watch as the nightmare unfolded. She was safe in a lifeboat, a luxury her brothers were not afforded. She had to watch, had to see it for herself, hoping her brothers would be okay.

***

The men were struggling with the second collapsible lifeboat, as the water rushed over the bow. They'd managed to unfasten it, but when the water had rushed up, faster and faster now, the lifeboat was still upside down.

It would have to do.

Hannibal's body was working on survival instinct now, and in the coming days he wouldn't be able to clearly recall how he got off the ship. Almost as if losing Nigel and saying goodbye to him was the last thing that truly mattered that night, in his mind.

He saw the water rushing in, saw the second collapsible lifeboat be cut from its ropes and start to float, upside down. There were no other options, so Hannibal jumped into the water, swimming away from the sinking bow, going towards the collapsible lifeboat.

The water was cold enough to take his breath away, and somewhere in the back of his mind he was thankful he was wearing a lifebelt. Nobody would last long in the water, that much was obvious.

It was chaos, as Hannibal clung to the upside down lifeboat, as everything seemed to happen at once.

Cables began to snap on one of the ship's funnels, hitting a few unfortunate people in the water. The funnel fell with a gigantic splash, crushing a few poor souls beneath its weight.

The ripple effect of the funnel landing in the water caused the lifeboat to sway in the water, as even more people clung to it, desperate for anything to hold on to.

Somehow, in the midst of the chaos and devastation, the people surrounding the upturned lifeboat became organised enough to get further away from the ship, with Officer Lightoller taking charge, organising the people so the lifeboat and their last remaining hope to survive the icy ocean would stay afloat.

Hannibal had climbed aboard, everyone standing very carefully so their weight was distributed just right, with some people clinging to the sides as well. They were some of the lucky ones, having something to cling to.

Internally, Hannibal's mind was racing. Nigel was dead. His twin, who he had shared all of his life with, who he had gone through so much with, was gone. How would he tell Mischa? It had been hard enough explaining to Mischa what had happened to their parents and everything that followed, but this would be so much harder.

So much had changed. Had it really only been that morning that he had been with Will, since he and Will had made love? Since they had all planned to start their new lives together? Hannibal and Will, Nigel with Adam.

Oh god, Adam. Nigel had promised to find him, when this was all over. Adam knew he would, had said as much. Adam would be devastated, Hannibal knew that. Silently, he made a promise to take care of Adam, to look after him in Nigel's place. It's what Nigel would want.

Hannibal steadfastly refused to entertain the possibility that Adam or Will wouldn't make it. He had to believe they would. He had to. He didn't want to lose them, now that he'd just found them.

***

Will held on tightly to Adam, as the stern rose in the air. He had started to rethink his plan slightly, wondering if they shouldn't have gotten off the ship as soon as they possibly could have. But Adam wasn't a very strong swimmer, and the water was deathly cold, he knew that. The longer they could stay dry, the more chance they had of survival.

Adam held onto his twin brother, refusing to think about the night that lay ahead. There were too many variables, too many ways everything could go wrong. The lifeboats were already quite far away, would they even come back? What if the suction was too great when the ship went under, and everyone standing here right now was pulled under with it? Even if the lifeboats came back, was there a rescue on the way? Did anyone out there know what was going on?

It was too much to think about, too much to consider, so Will focussed on Adam, on keeping his brother safe.

Adam was overwhelmed, his heart trying to beat right out of his chest, as he looked around. As much as he wanted to bury his head in Will's shoulder, he couldn't look away from anything happening around them.

He looked out over the stern, to the lifeboat rowing away, the people jumping over the railings, swimming away frantically. His mind briefly reminded him of their first night on the Titanic, when he'd nearly gone overboard.

Nigel and Hannibal had saved him, leading to everything that had happened since. The irony of ending up back here was not lost on him.

"Will, this is where we first met Hannibal and Nigel." Adam said, holding on tightly. That had been a good day, despite him nearly dying.

Will looked at him, blinking as he remembered. "It is." He smiled briefly, despite the situation. "I'm glad we met them." Had that really only been a few days ago? It felt like they had been with the Lecter's for longer than that, Will could scarcely remember a time without them in his life. He wouldn't have it any other way.

The ship tilted even more, the stern rising higher and higher. People began to slide down the decks, unable to keep hold for any longer. Will could feel his feet slipping, and he turned to get a better hold of the railing, Adam following his lead.

The lights on the ship went out, plunging them all into darkness.

The ship wasn't designed to stay afloat this way, with the bow in the ocean and the stern in the air. The pressure grew to be too great, as the ship began to split in two. The wooden decks cracked, a split almost straight down the middle of the ship, causing the stern to crash back down to the water.

Adam held on tight to the railing and to Will as the stern fell, falling with an almighty splash into the water, onto the poor souls who had jumped earlier in an attempt to escape.

Will was silently thankful they'd stayed on the ship now.

The bow began to sink even faster, water rushing into the ship at the point she had split, hastening her demise, until that half of the ship was almost completely underwater, pulling the stern along with it.

The stern was rising again, and Will knew he wouldn't be able to hold on this time. "Come on, we have to move!" Will had to shout to be heard over the noise of everyone else shouting and screaming, along with the noise of a ship breaking in two.

He climbed over easily, standing precariously on the railing. Some part of him felt that this was unnatural, standing on a part of the ship that should never have been at this angle. He reached for Adam, pulling him over.

They both laid down on their fronts, clinging to the railing, watching as the other passengers either followed their lead in climbing over, or slipped and fell into the destruction below.

A young woman was clinging to the railing, struggling to pull herself over. Will grabbed her hand, but the ship jerked before he could help her over, and she slipped out of his grasp.

“What’s happening, Will?” Adam asked, his voice small. They were going to be pulled under, weren’t they? If they stayed holding on to the ship it would pull them down, Adam knew that. But this was Will’s plan, so he trusted it.

“I don’t know, Adam.” Will watched, feeling the stern sinking further and further into the ocean. He could see the ocean beneath them now, rapidly approaching.

This was it.

“Adam, when I say I need you to take a deep breath, okay? Keep kicking, and don’t let go of my hand when we hit the water, okay?” Will squeezed his brother's hand, for emphasis. “The ship is gonna suck us under, but keep kicking and we’ll reach the surface.” It wasn’t the best plan, all things considered.

Adam nodded, squeezing Will’s hand in return. He watched as the water rose and rose, closer and closer.

“Now, Adam!” Will shouted, taking a deep breath as the stern sank under the water, and they were all plunged into the icy waters of the ocean.

***

Hannibal watched from the overturned lifeboat as the Titanic finally sank beneath the surface of the waters, leaving devastation in her wake. Will and Adam were out there, somewhere.

Lightoller stood at the front of the lifeboat, watching the Titanic in her final moments. He never would have dreamed her maiden voyage would end like this. “She’s gone.” He whispered.

***

In the lifeboat, Beverly heard rather than saw the ship go under. Once the lights had gone out, there was nothing to be seen, except a faint outline against the stars.

The worst sounds of all were the screams and shouts of the people still on board and still in the water, a loud cacophony of disaster.

There was nothing anyone could say, really. The scene was beyond words to accurately describe it. Beverly could help herself, remembering her husband and all the other souls on board. “Oh Lord have mercy.” She said, as if in prayer.

No prayers could help them now.

Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Warning for Major Character death, non specific descriptions of dead bodies.

The lifeboat was quiet in the minutes after the sinking. Time seemed to have lost all meaning, minutes stretched to feel like hours, with nothing around them but darkness.

With the Titanic plunging down the ocean floor, the loneliness of the lifeboats and their survivors was obvious.

There was no one else around. There was no ship, although there was a light in the distance. No rescue on the horizon, only the lifeboats and the bodies, both living and dead, in the water.

They were alone.

That's certainly how Chiyoh felt, for the first time in a long time. For so long she had been with the Lecters, long enough that they considered her family. They had been through a lot together.

And now Chiyoh didn't know if they had survived. She didn't know if they'd rescued Adam, and found Will, either.

Despite only knowing Adam and Will for merely days, Chiyih still had a soft spot for them. She hadn't seen Nigel and Hannibal so happy in a long while, and it was down to Will and Adam.

But Mischa was here, Mischa was safe. That was the one bright spot in all of this.

Next to her, Beverly was silent. Her husband was still on that ship, still out there somewhere. There was a small hope in her heart that he was still alive, but part of her deep down knew he was probably gone.

She wanted to row, to force the boat to return for any survivors, in the hopes of saving even one person. But another woman, known to everyone as Molly Brown, beat her to it.

The idea was shot down immediately by the crewman in charge of the lifeboat, saying they would be swamped.

Mischa, now sitting in Chiyoh's lap, was drifting off to sleep, because despite the events of the night, it was still past her bedtime. She was tired, and cold, and just wanted to feel safe again.

Chiyoh cradled her charge to her chest, needing the reassurance that she wasn't alone. She felt Beverly lean against her, also needing some human comfort.

They would need all the comfort they could get.

***

Fuck, the water was cold. That was all Will could think, as he was plunged into the ocean. It took over his entire brain, literally taking his breath away. The water was all encompassing, surrounding him and making it hard to know which way was up.

All Will knew was that he had to keep hold of Adam's hand, which he squeezed tight.

The suction the ship had created was almost too much, it almost felt like he'd be sucked down to the ocean floor if he gave up, but Will kept kicking and kicking.

Adam was struggling too, the temperature of the water shocking him to the core, as he struggled to remember to kick, hold his breath and hold on to Will's hand all at the same time.

Will felt his hand slip away from Adam's, inevitable with the combination of the suction and the sheer panic in the water. He surfaced, gasping for breath as he kept kicking.

A life vest would have come in handy right about now, and for just one second Will regretted dissuading Hannibal from giving him his, but he dismissed it instantly. Hannibal needed it just as much.

Thank fuck Adam had one, though.

As Will surfaced, taking a deep breath, he looked around, kicking to stay afloat. What he saw was chaos.

The ship was gone, leaving only debris and people in her wake, floating and struggling in the water. The absence of the ship brought home just how many people hadn't made it to a lifeboat, how many people were left in the water.

There were so many people, hundreds at least if not a thousand all left behind, fighting over debris to use as floatation devices or something to keep them out of the freezing cold water.

And the noise, the air was full of the sounds of people crying, screaming, shouting for the boats to come back.

And Will still needed to find Adam.

***

Adam tried his hardest to hold on to Will's hand under the water, he really did. But it was just too much. He felt it slip, panicked and tried to reach for it again but Will was gone.

The suction and the disturbance in the water caused by the ship's descent was making everything so confusing, it was hard to know which way was up.

Adam kicked as much as he could, reaching for the surface, his life vest (Nigel's life vest, a small voice reminded him) making it a bit easier.

He surfaced, gasping for air as he did, looking around in search of his brother. "Will!" he shouted, desperately. He swam around a little bit, which was near impossible just because of how many people were in the water. "Will!"

He felt someone behind him, but before Adam could even react, hoping it was Will, he felt two hands on his head, pushing him down.

He was pushed under the water, barely managing to take a breath, panic surrounding his mind once more. He pushed up, managing to put his head above the water long enough to shout "No!" before going back beneath the surface.

The man holding Adam down was so panicked and desperate he wasn't fully aware of what he was doing, that the young boy would drown if he kept holding him down like that.

Will, still desperately searching for Adam, had heard his brother's shouts, and swam towards him, seeing the whole thing unfold. "Let go of him!"

The man wasn't listening, was still holding Adam down, so Will did the only thing he could - punch him in the face.

The man let go of Adam, finally, going underwater briefly himself.

Adam resurfaced, gasping for air. That had been close.

Will grabbed hold of his brother, tightly holding on to his life jacket, this time determined not to lose him. "Adam, we have to swim, okay?" They had to get out of here, get away from the panicked horde of people in the water.

Adam nodded, following behind Will as they swam through the people, until eventually Will found a piece of the ship that no one else had claimed yet. It was a piece of wood, just big enough for one person to stay afloat, hopefully.

"Come on Adam, get on." Will helped Adam climb aboard the wood, praying that it would stay afloat. The water was too cold to survive in it for long, and he knew that.

Adam climbed aboard, laying flat on his stomach so he could look at Will. It was cold, so fucking cold, even out of the water. Every part of him was wet, and Adam wondered if he'd ever be dry again.

But Will had found him, they were still here, together. That was all that mattered.

Will's teeth were chattering, cold down to his very bones. Both his hands held tightly to Adam's, not wanting to let go for even a second.

A shrill sound pierced through the night, a whistle.

Will looked to the side to see a crewmember, holding on to a piece of wood just barely staying afloat. “Return...the boats!” He shouted, in between whistles.

Will looked back to Adam, thankful that he’d kept him safe at the very least. Now they just needed the boats to return, so they could get on one, and hopefully reunite with the Lecter’s, eventually.

Adam looked at Will, the way he was shivering. He knew that wasn’t good. “Do you think Hannibal and Nigel made it?” He asked. Talking helped ease some of the noise in his mind, the panic and worry over what would happen next.

Will nodded, smiling at the thought of Hannibal. “I’m sure they did.” He had to believe they had survived, for his own sake as well as Adam’s. But looking around at the people in the water around them, it was hard to stay hopeful.

In the cold of the night, some poor souls had already died, their life vests keeping them floating in the water.

“Are we going to stay with them, after all this is over?” Adam asked. He knew they had planned to stay together, but he needed the distraction, needed the reassurance that they’d be with Nigel and Hannibal again.

Will nodded. “Of course we are. Nigel promised he would find you, okay? We’re gonna grow old with them, watch Mischa grow up, live in a nice big house away from everyone else.” Will needed the reminder just as much as Adam.

Adam and Will kept talking, both just looking at each other and avoiding everyone else around them. They talked about anything and everything, something to keep them both awake on this long night.

“Do you ever wonder what happened to our father?” Adam rarely spoke or thought of him, that part of their lives a painful memory for both of them.

“Drank himself to death, I assume.” Will could feel the cold seeping in, staying in the water for all this time. He looked at Adam, those big blue eyes, a mirror image of himself. He moved one hand to stroke Adam's hair, pulling him close enough to kiss him on the forehead.

“I’m glad we ran away from him. Thank you for taking me with you.” Adam knew it hadn’t been easy, that he hadn’t always made it easy for Will to look after him, to look after them. That it might have been easier for Will to be on his own, instead of keeping Adam safe all the time.

Will looked at him in shock. As if he would have ever left Adam behind? “Of course I’d take you with me, Adam. We’re brothers, twins. You’re my other half. I’m never going anywhere without you.” He kissed Adam on the forehead again, a reassurance. “I’ll always be with you, okay? Always.”

Adam smiled, thankful to have Will with him. “Always.”

***

They talked for a short while, a distraction for both of them. As the minutes went on, the noise died down, going from the sounds of a crowd shouting and screaming to an almost complete silence.

Will wasn't stupid. The lifeboats weren't coming back, not anytime soon. They might, eventually, but too late for most of those left in the water. Too late for Will. It was cold in the water, too cold to survive for much longer. Adam should be okay, on the door. But Will wouldn't be. He knew. He could feel it, feel the urge to sleep coming over him.

If he slept, he knew he wouldn’t wake up again.

"Adam, I need you to promise me something." He held on tightly to Adam's hand, squeezing harshly. "Whatever happens, I want you to live a good life. Be with Nigel, do everything you want to do. Okay? I love you, you know that, right?"

"Of course I do. I love you too. I promise, we'll live a good life." Why was Will saying all this? There was still time for the lifeboats to come back. “Do you think the boats will be coming soon?" The lifeboats had to come back, Adam was sure. There were still so many survivors in the water, they wouldn't leave them there. Would they?

"They will, I'm sure." Will was lying through his teeth. If they were going to come back, it would have happened already. He didn’t want to leave Adam alone, not now and not ever, but the water was too cold. Even the whistle had stopped.

Will watched Adam’s eyes close, and squeezed his hand. They needed to stay awake, they both did. But it was so cold, and the boats hadn’t come back yet. He didn’t want Adam to give up. “Don’t do that Adam. Stay awake.”

Adam opened his eyes, meeting Will’s. He was so tired, and so cold. He just wanted to sleep, to close his eyes and wake up somewhere warm. Preferably in Nigels arms, or Will’s. “I’m so cold.” He felt so frozen he couldn’t even cry.

“I know. But we can’t give up, okay? Think of Nigel, and Mischa. You have to stay awake.” Will needed to follow his own advice, but that was getting harder and harder. He kissed Adam on the forehead again, not even feeling it because his lips were frozen. “Stay with me, Adam.”

“Where else would I go?” Adam replied, watching his brother. They were twins, where Will went, Adam did too. Always. He blinked slowly, not really able to focus on anything. He was just so tired, as he laid his head on the wood.

A few more minutes passed, and the hope that the lifeboats were coming got smaller and smaller until it wasn’t even there anymore. If they did return now it would be too late, for a lot of people in the water.

Will tried to hold on, he really did, he needed to hold on for Adam. But he couldn't. He felt his eyes close, and knew it would be for the last time.

***

Adam blinked, not sure how much time had passed since either of them last spoke. He could still feel Will's hand in his own, and he squeezed it.

It was frozen solid.

Adam looked properly at Will, now, noticed how his eyes were closed, small bits of ice sticking to his face. His lips were blue, and everything was cold. "Will?" Adams' voice was hoarse, either from talking or the cold he wasn't sure. "Will?" A bit more insistent this time.

Will didn't respond.

"Will!" Adam shook him, using his free hand to take Will by the shoulder. Nothing. Will was as cold as ice, frozen and unmoving.

Will was gone, and there was nothing Adam could do to bring him back.

Adam was alone, now. It had been too long, Will had spent too long in the water, and it was too late now. If only the wood had been big enough, if the lifeboats had come back, if anything had gone differently.

Adam felt his heart break, as the reality set in. Will, who had always been there for him, every day of his life, was gone. He'd never hear his voice again, never see him again, and he could barely even comprehend it.

He had never gone a day in his life without Will, and now he would have to live the rest of his life without him.

Adam felt a few tears slip down his cheeks, remembering his promise to Will. To live a good life, with Nigel. To keep going, to live. He brought Will's hand up, kissing it gently, taking one last look at Will before letting him go.

As he watched Will disappear into the depths of the ocean, Adam whispered "You'll always be with me, Will."

Chapter 18

The stars were pretty, a constant in the sky even in the middle of the ocean. Adam had very carefully rolled onto his back in order to stare at them, a distraction on this dreadful night.

He had always loved the stars, loved learning everything he could about them. Often when he and Will had nowhere to sleep for the night, and they had slept on the streets, Adam had felt content purely because he could see the stars.

He felt similarly now.

Even if he was all alone, floating on this piece of wood in the middle of the ocean.

The stars made him think of Nigel, remembering how Nigel called him star. He'd give anything to hear him say it again, and Adam held on to the hope that he would. He played it in his mind, but it wasn't the same.

Nigel had promised to come back for him, promised to find him again. Adam knew he would.

Adam didn't have much else now, not without Will. It had been just the two of them for so long, Adam didn't know how he'd go on without him. He'd made a promise, and he kept his promises. So he would go on, no matter how much it hurt.

But there was still a small voice in his mind, getting quieter the longer he stayed out here, making him worry about what was to come. Would the lifeboats come back? Because they hadn't yet, and it would soon be too late. Was rescue on the way? Or were they all doomed to just float in the Atlantic forever?

Did anyone even know what had happened out here, know the devastation and death that now lay in the middle of the Atlantic? Or was everyone out here truly alone?

Adam didn't know what would happen, but he was so cold that he almost didn't care. If it had just been him and Will, Adam would have given up. He couldn't survive without Will, couldn't fathom life without him.

But there was Nigel to think about. Nigel was waiting for him, just like Hannibal was waiting for Will.

Adam needed to go on, for Nigel. To tell Hannibal what had happened to Will, so he wouldn't wonder for the rest of his life. Because Adam had nowhere else to go.

He had no other family, having never known his mother, and his father being as good as dead. No other brothers or sisters, there was only ever Adam and Will.

Now it was just Adam.

He had nowhere to go. Nowhere to live, no idea what to do, where to go. He had only a basic education, and didn't even have any papers or documents with him. Everything he and Will owned had been aboard the Titanic, so now it was on the bottom of the Atlantic.

Adam had nothing. No clothes, no money, no family, no idea what to do.

His only hope was Nigel, of staying with him. Of their original plan coming to fruition, spending the rest of their lives together.

Time passed in a blur for Adam, lost in his thoughts with nothing else to occupy him. He couldn't even grieve properly, partly because he was so cold, but also because he knew he couldn't.

If he gave in to his grief, it would overwhelm him and he'd never return. He had to stay aware, in order to survive. To see Nigel again. To go on without Will.

It was an indeterminate amount of time later when Adam heard the far away shouts of "is there anyone alive out there?"

The lifeboats had come back, too late for most of the survivors in the water. Adam knew this was what he and Will had been waiting for. His only chance of rescue and survival.

So, Adam forced himself to move. Despite his frozen limbs, cold down to his very soul, Adam moved. He rolled off the wood, barely even feeling the freezing cold water. He had to get the attention of the lifeboat somehow.

He tried shouting but it came out as a whisper, his voice hoarse from disuse. He remembered the whistle from earlier, when they'd first got into the water.

That felt like a lifetime ago.

Adam swam over, trying to avoid the realisation that the man who had been blowing the whistle was dead, frozen in the water, eyes still open. Adam plucked the whistle from his hand, putting it to his own mouth to signal that yes, there was someone alive out here.

It worked. Before he knew it, Adam was safe in a lifeboat, bundled up in blankets in an effort to stay warm.

He was one of the only ones they saved from the water that night.

***

Hannibal couldn't really remember much of what happened on the upturned lifeboat, it was all just a wet and cold haze.

The lifeboat was precarious, and over the course of the night was slowly sinking deeper and deeper, as the air bubble allowing it to stay afloat slowly disappeared.

Eventually they were rescued by another lifeboat, brought out of the ocean that threatened to overcome them all.

Hannibal couldn't remember the specifics, but he remembered how he felt.

Lost.

Nigel had been by his side his whole life. And now he wasn't. Hannibal should have done more, he felt. If he'd stayed with Nigel, if they'd gotten to a lifeboat sooner, if if if…

It was too late for that now.

Hannibal realised that, knew that there was no point dwelling on what could have been. He'd done enough of that when their parents had died. It got him nowhere. Endless nights wondering what he could have done to change it, how he could have prevented it, protected Mischa more.

It hadn't helped then. And it wouldn't help now.

Sat in the lifeboat, Hannibal thought of his family. Of Mischa, safe with Chiyoh, not knowing Nigel was gone. He thought of Will, what had happened between them only earlier that night, something he was eternally grateful for now. A memory of peace and love, before everything got ripped out from under them. Of Adam, how happy he had been with Nigel.

Hannibal didn't want to think of how he would tell Adam, knowing how much he and Nigel meant to each other. It was a small reminder that Hannibal wasn't the only one who had lost Nigel.

Whilst he was currently the only one to be grieving for Nigel, the only one who knew he was dead, come daylight he wouldn't be alone. He would have Mischa, Chiyoh, Will and Adam. He would see them again, and they could grieve together.

No matter how alone he felt right now.

***

Mischa had fallen asleep curling up against Chiyoh, the events of the night having caught up to her. Sleep was at the very least a small respite from the cold, and the waiting.

Small whispered conversations were happening in the lifeboat, for lack of anything else to do. Some people exchanged names, introduced themselves, and exchanged pleasantries.

Like they hadn't just witnessed the destruction of the Titanic.

Chiyoh, despite her best efforts, thought of what would happen if, no, when they were rescued, formulating a plan should the worst come to fruition.

If they landed in New York, she would be able to find Hannibal and Nigel's uncle, Robertus. He would look after her and Mischa, his own family. If Hannibal and Nigel had survived, they would be okay together, the way they had been for the last few years. Adam and Will would slot right into their little family.

She spared a brief thought for Bedelia, who she presumed would have gotten in a lifeboat. She wasn't in this lifeboat, thankfully. But she was a first class female passenger, odds are she would be in one of the lifeboats. It didn't matter, not after what she had done to Adam. She wasn't a part of their future anymore.

How Uncle Robertus would react to that, she didn't know. Would he even take her in? Or would he just take Mischa and cast Chiyoh away, as she wasn't a Lecter?

"You okay there, hon?" Beverley asked, seeing the slight worry pass over Chiyoh's features. She had one arm around Chiyoh, to provide some comfort.

Chiyoh shook her head. "Just thinking about the future." Who would be in it, where she would be. She had promised to take care of Mischa, and that was what she'd do.

Bev smiled sadly. "Aren't we all? If we land in New York, and you need somewhere to go, you're welcome to stay with me. You all are." She didn't know much about the Lecter's, but her doors were always open. "The boys included." God she hoped they had all survived, including Will and Adam. She had a soft spot for those poor boys.

"Thank you." Chiyoh whispered, resting her head on Beverly's shoulder. She didn't have anyone else except for the Lecter's, and mentally she added Beverly to that list.

Now all they needed was a rescue.

***

The survivors in the lifeboats waited.

There was nothing else to do.

All they could do was wait. Wait to die, wait to live. Wait for an absolution that would never come.

The Titanic had taken her final plunge down the depths of the Atlantic Ocean at 2.20 am.

At 4am, as dawn broke, rescue would finally arrive for those in the lifeboats, in the form of the RMS Carpathia.

Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Adam never wanted to step foot on a boat again. All they seemed to hold was misery and loneliness.

The Carpathia had arrived, taking on board all of the survivors from the lifeboats, providing them shelter, food and hot drinks, and safety. They wouldn't arrive in New York for a couple of days, leaving the survivors to process their shock and grief from the preceding events.

There was a sombre atmosphere, as people came to terms with what had happened. Losing their loved ones, not knowing who had survived, not knowing what had happened. Babies cried, unaware of what was going on around them, a small mercy.

The survivors were still sorted by class, and had been told to stay where they were so a full list of survivors could be made. Adam's name had already been taken down by an officer with a clipboard, so he sat down on the floor, huddled under a warm blanket in the corner.

He was alone.

He couldn't sleep, still scared that if he closed his eyes he might never open them again. When he did close his eyes all he could see was the ocean, or Will in front of him.

Adam's mind seemed to be an endless loop, thoughts and anxiety running through his mind as if on a train track that had no destination.

Will's gone, you're alone.

Nigel won't come and find you.

You have nowhere to go, no one left.

You're alone.

And on and on. He couldn't do anything about it, so he just let the thoughts run around in his mind, left with nothing else to do. It became a sort of mantra, a twisted prayer, with a lack of anything else to do and only himself for company.

All he could do was wait.

***

Chiyoh stood with Mischa in her arms, the little girl's head resting on her shoulder, searching for any sign of Hannibal and Nigel on board the Carpathia. She needed to know, more than she needed to sleep. They had been told it was unlikely there would still be any survivors in

the water, and no other ship was around to pick up any survivors, so all the survivors were here, on the Carpathia.

Beverly had stayed by her side, not having anyone else to be with. She was also looking at everyone else around them, searching for faces she knew. Having already checked the survivors list, she knew she wouldn't see the one person she wanted to.

Almost as if out of nowhere, Hannibal appeared, wrapped in a warm blanket, racing towards them. The relief that he felt was immeasurable, seeing Mischa and Chiyoh safe. For a brief moment he forgot everything else, forgot that Nigel was gone, because all that mattered was that Mischa and Chiyoh were safe, in front of him. His family.

It was an emotional reunion, with Mischa being squished between Hannibal and Chiyoh, before he took her in his arms, holding her tightly. It was as if all their worries, their anxieties had vanished, with the knowledge that they were all safe.

Nearly all of them.

“Where’s Nigel?” Mischa asked, never taking her eyes off Hannibal. A small part of her thought that if she looked away he might vanish. It had been such a long night, a long time to wonder about her brothers. To hope they were okay.

Chiyoh could see from the way Hannibal’s smile fell, all of the joy of their reunion immediately vacating the atmosphere. She knew, it was obvious. Her heart skipped a beat, at the realisation.

Hannibal took a deep breath, steeling himself for what he had to tell Mischa. This wasn’t going to be easy. “Nigel didn’t make it.” Quick and to the point, ripping the band aid off. The easiest way to do it. Hannibal unfortunately knew from experience. A small part of him had thought that maybe he was wrong, that he would find Nigel here on the Carpathia, a foolish dream.

Mischa, wise beyond her years, understood immediately, tears forming in her eyes as she hugged her brother closely. In her mind, the name of Nigel went to a similar place as the names Simonetta and Ramunas, forever etched in her heart and mind. A permanent memorial to the family members she had lost.

Chiyoh, who had been stoic and sensible all night, cried into Beverley's shoulder, as her worst fears had come to pass. Nigel was gone, and their family would never be the same.

The details of Nigel’s death were spared for the time being, everyone believing Mischa did not need to know the specifics just yet.

“Have you found your husband, Beverly?” Hannibal asked, cradling Mischa to him. At least some of his family were safe, and had survived the night. He could only hope the same for Will and Adam, that they were also on this ship, somewhere.

Beverly shook her head. “I checked over the survivor list. His name isn’t on there.” Her lip wobbled, at the confirmation that she was now a widow. That her love was gone. She glanced

at her wedding ring, one arm still around Chiyoh.

“Where’s Adam and Will?” Mischa asked, looking up at Hannibal. The last she had seen them, Adam had been arrested and Will dragged back to first class. That had only been last night, but so much had happened since then.

“We rescued Adam, found Will, but were separated before the ship sank. I’m going to find them, I promise.” Hannibal winced internally at the wording, remembering that Nigel had promised to return to Adam. A promise that would never be fulfilled, now. Hannibal could do it in his place, however.

***

Adam stayed in the corner, lost and alone. There wasn’t anything he could do. This ship was completely different from the Titanic, he would never find his way around it, to search for Nigel.

So he stayed in place, closing himself off from the world. For now, there was nothing in it for him. He instead retreated to his memories, to Will.

Various memories flashed through his head - their decision to leave home; the two of them lying in a field looking at the stars; Will winning the poker game that led them on this journey; Will, smiling and happy.

Adam was safe in his memories, he was still with Will. He wasn’t alone, or cold, or lonely.

“Will! Adam!”

There was something happening, Adam noted distantly, some commotion with the rest of the third class passengers. He ignored it, not paying attention to it very closely.

“Will! Adam!”

It was louder now, and Adam blinked slowly, realising it was his name being shouted. He heard it again, recognising the voice as Hannibal. Even though he and Nigel sounded almost identical, Adam could tell them apart. Hannibal’s voice was more elegant, controlled. Nigel was brash, coarse when he spoke.

“Hannibal!” Adam said, his voice not loud enough to be a shout. He watched as someone came through the crowd, and then suddenly Hannibal was in front of him, kneeling down.

They both looked like hell, tired and grieving, aging years in the mere hours that had passed since they last saw each other.

Hannibal and Adam both realised something at the same time. They were both alone, without their twin.

“Where’s Nigel?” Adam asked, remembering the promise. Maybe Nigel had stayed with Mischa, sent Hannibal to come and get them.

Hannibal shook his head, slowly. “He didn’t make it.” It wasn’t any easier to say the second time around, not seeing Adam’s eyes fill with tears, hugging his knees to himself as the knowledge hit him.

Nigel was gone. He wasn’t coming back. Adam would never see him again, never hear him call him star, or hold him or kiss him. The promise of seeing Nigel again had kept Adam going, alone on that piece of wood. He was truly alone now, without Will and Nigel.

“Where’s Will?” Hannibal whispered, although he feared he knew the answer already. He wouldn’t have left Adam alone, not by choice.

“Will’s dead.” Adam said through his tears, unable to stop his emotions overwhelming him anymore.

Hannibal felt his shoulders shake, tears slipping down his cheeks. Will, his beautiful Will, was gone, to the same watery grave as Nigel. He’d never kiss Will again, they’d never make love again, they couldn’t be together. Both Nigel and Will were gone, and it was too much.

Adam tipped his head back, hitting the wall. He did it again, and again, the physical pain a small distraction from his heart being ripped in two. Usually Will would stop him, put his hand between the wall and Adam’s head, or hold him tight, whispering soothing words. There was none of that, now.

Adam felt his head connect with something else, looked to see it was Hannibal’s hand. He blinked. Why was Hannibal still here? He had come here for Will, so why was he still with Adam? “Why are you still here?”

Hannibal moved to sit beside Adam, shoulders touching. “What do you mean?” He longed to hug the boy, give him some comfort, but knew Adam was particular about that. He didn't want to distress him further.

“You’re here for Will, but Will isn’t here. You can go back to your family now.” Adam whispered. The deal had been for him and Nigel, Will and Hannibal to be together. With no Will or Nigel, there was no more deal, right? Hannibal had wanted Will, and with Nigel gone Adam had no place with them.

It took a second, but Hannibal caught on. Adam thought he would abandon him, leave him behind. As if he ever could. “Adam, I need you to look at me.”

Adam focused his gaze on Hannibal’s forehead, the closest to eye contact he could stomach right now.

“I am not leaving you. Even without Will and Nigel, you are part of my family. The plan was for us all to stay together, and it still stands. I am fulfilling Nigel’s promise to come back for you, to look after you.” He meant it with every part of his being. He knew that both Will and Nigel would haunt him if he abandoned Adam, left him alone. He couldn’t do that.

Adam’s gaze shifted to Hannibal’s eyes for a brief second, so much like Nigel’s that it shocked him. He blinked, tears obscuring his vision. For a brief second Nigel was in front of

him, one last time. Adam nodded, before collapsing into Hannibal’s arms. “Thank you.” He whispered, meaning it with all his heart.

Hannibal wrapped his arms around Adam, letting both of them just stay in the moment, grieving for their respective twins and lovers. They had both lost a lot, but could find their way in the strange new world together.

Eventually, they moved, Hannibal bringing Adam up to first class with him, arguing with any stewards who protested otherwise.

Adam was welcomed with open arms by Mischa, Chiyoh and Beverly, all of them hugging him carefully as he told all of them what had happened, tears in everyone's eyes.

They all recounted their stories, their tales of that night, one by one, as a way of healing. Hannibal recounted Nigel's last moments, how he had said goodbye and laid him to rest in the water. Beverly recounted the events of the lifeboat, the argument of going back to pick up survivors. Adam was straightforward as he spoke of his last conversation with Will, his promise to Will, comforted by Mischa hugging him gently. There was a lot of hugging and crying in the days to come, aboard the Carpathia.

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When the Carpathia landed in New York, everyone disembarked together, a new family borne out of tragedy.

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact: Hannibal searching for Adam on the Carpathia was the first scene I wrote, months ago. I had been toying with the idea of a Titanic fic, and that scene just popped into my head one night, and thus this whole thing was born:)

Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

> This is the last proper chapter! (With the exception of an alternate happy ending coming in a few days)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1997

Mischa walked around the house, not quite as fast as she used to be. When they had first moved in, she loved to run around the hallways, slide down the bannisters, it was like a giant maze.

Now she has slowed down a bit, in her old age. But she couldn't really be annoyed at her growing older, understanding that it was a privilege to be able to live so long, when she knew so many who hadn't.

Brock Lovett had just left, having spent a few days listening to Mischa tell her family's story, explaining the drawings he had found, and ensuring that someone else knew their story.

Mischa was the only one left now.

She rounded a corner, finding her favourite painting in the whole house - it was of their family, all of them done in the style of a family portrait, even though some of the people in the painting had never met.

On the left side stood Simonetta and Ramunas Lecter, her parents, looking exactly as they did in her memory. Next to them was Hannibal and Nigel, with a young 8 year old Mischa in front of them, their hands on her shoulders. Next to Hannibal stood Chiyoh, with Beverly behind her, holding hands. In a small portrait-within-a-portrait was Beverlys husband, behind everyone else. Finally came Adam and Will, dressed as they had been for their meal in first class, both smiling.

It was a way for everyone in the house, everyone who remained, to remember those they had lost. A permanent tribute to their family, their full family, both past and present.

Hannibal had painted it, a year after the disaster, after Adam had remarked that he didn't even have any pictures of Will or Nigel. He knew logically that he and Hannibal looked the same as their twins, but there were differences.

Mischa stood looking at the picture, a sad smile coming to her face. She was the only one left now, from this picture, but she had explained it to her children and her grandchildren, who these people were. So it wouldn't be forgotten.

After the sinking, Uncle Robertus had given Hannibal his inheritance, helped them buy this estate to live in for the rest of their lives. It was surrounded by beautiful gardens, far away from the ocean. Large enough for everyone to have their space, should they need it.

Hannibal explained everything to his uncle, including what Bedelia had done, not that it mattered in the end. Witnesses reported seeing a woman matching Bedelia's description falling overboard, although whether she slipped or was drunk no one knew. She was never found, along with Jack Crawford.

Hannibal had stayed true to his promise, looking after Adam and providing everything he ever wanted. Slowly, their connection turned more romantic, and although they both still loved Will and Nigel, there was some solace to be found together.

Adam was never quite the same again, never quite smiled as brightly or laughed as loudly as he used to, but he found some joy in his life, and Will and Nigel were never far from his thoughts.

Beverly ended up staying with the Lecters, saying she had no other family left, for a while it had just been her and her husband. She was welcomed with open arms, another addition to the household.

Chiyoh ran the estate, needing something to do as Mischa got older and became more independent. If anyone asked, Chiyoh was the one in charge, not Hannibal. Somewhere along the line she and Beverly got together, although Mischa had always suspected it was earlier than they told anyone. They worked well together.

Mischa got older, explored the world, settled down and had a family but never spoke publicly about the night the Titanic sank. None of them did, except for Hannibal at the inquiry into the accident.

They rarely spoke of that night, traumatic as it was for all of them, although at some point or another there were nightmares, bursting into tears at the smallest, seemingly inconsequential thing.

Every year on the anniversary, the whole family sat down and had a meal together, to remember their lost loved ones.

Mischa blinked away tears, looking at the portrait. She was the only one left, now. Beverly and Chiyoh had passed away a few years ago of old age, quite close to each other, having led good lives.

Hannibal and Adam had both passed away in 1985, within a few weeks of each other, in their 90's. It had been peaceful, and sad, but Mischa knew they were at peace now, hopefully reunited with Nigel and Will.

It hadn't been long after the wreck of the Titanic had been found. Mischa knew it wasn't a coincidence, that maybe some part of Hannibal and Adam were waiting for the ship to be found to finally be at peace, to be with Will and Nigel again.

It would soon be her turn, she knew that. But for now, she remained, telling their story.

***

Adam closed his eyes in his bed aged 91, and opened them again aged 18, on the Titanic once more.

Hannibal stood in front of him, dressed in his best suit, looking as he had on the Titanic, not a grey hair or wrinkle in sight. “They’re waiting for us.” He said, one arm extended like a gentleman.

Adam linked arms with Hannibal, happy to see him so young again. Somehow he knew what was happening, in his heart, so he didn’t question anything.

The doors opened, leading to the grand staircase of the Titanic. She was restored to her former glory, all brand new and as beautiful as she ever was.

Standing at the top of the stairs was Will and Nigel, side by side, waiting patiently.

Hannibal and Adam ascended the stairs, unlinking their arms to go to their respective brothers and embracing them tightly.

Adam and Will cried as they hugged, with Adam finally feeling whole again after so long without Will.

Nigel and Hannibal also cried, Hannibal also feeling complete again. He hadn't been the same since that fateful night.

The brothers separated only for long enough to switch, with Hannibal kissing Will passionately, tears streaming down his face, hands grasping Will tightly.

Adam and Nigel kissed, with Nigel lifting Adam off his feet, Adam still crying as they were all finally together again.

Adam and Nigel, Hannibal and Will. Together at last, in each other's arms again.

And this time they were never letting go.

Chapter End Notes

> And that's the end! It has been a lovely 5 months writing this, so I'd like to say thank you to everyone who has read, subscribed and/or commented❤️❤️

Alternate Happy Ending

Chapter Summary

As promised, the alternate happy ending where everyone survives! (I promise)

Picks up just after chapter 14, so a small recap - Mischa, Chiyoh and Bev are in a lifeboat; Hannibal, Will and Nigel have just rescued Adam after he was arrested, and that's it.

Mischa watched the Titanic from her lifeboat, squeezing the life out of her teddy bear. They had rowed away from the ship, far enough away that the crewman said they wouldn't be pulled under when the Titanic went down, but still close enough to see. The lights were still on, the only way to see what was happening.

She couldn't take her eyes off it, not knowing that her brothers might still be on board. They had said they would find another lifeboat, but she'd overheard another passenger on this lifeboat whisper that there weren't enough lifeboats, and the ones Mischa could see didn't look full.

What if they didn't get on a lifeboat?

Chiyoh had found herself leaning against Beverly slightly, tired even though the night was far from over. Everything was so uncertain, so unknown, and Chiyoh found all the variables weighing on her mind. She had no idea what the rest of the night would hold in store, and it would be hours before help arrived, if there was any on the way.

Beverly turned her thoughts away from the ship, away from her husband who was still on board. There was nothing she could do now. She took to asking Mischa about her teddy bear, hoping to distract her slightly.

It was going to be a long night.

***

Hannibal, Nigel, Will and Adam arrived on deck, wet and tired from their swim through the lower decks of the ship. They had just rescued Adam, and knew they were running out of time. There was no time to stop, catch their breaths, or just have a moment together. They had to get off the ship, and soon.

The lifeboats were still being launched, there was still a chance for them all to escape, at the very least. One problem - it was women and children only. There had to be a way.

There was a small commotion coming from one of the lifeboats being lowered - a first class woman was shouting up to the crew member in charge of lowering the boat.

“Hold it there! We’ve only got one sailor in this boat!” She shouted up, as the lifeboat stopped. Every lifeboat needed at least 2 crewmen, 2 people who knew what they were doing.

The officer in charge turned to the passengers gathered on deck, mostly men at this point, including Hannibal, Nigel, Adam and Will. “Are there any spare hands here, any seamen? ” He asked the crowd.

Will stepped forward, holding Adam’s hand tightly. “I know my way around a boat.” He had worked on plenty, and would like to have his own, one day. He could help, he knew it.

The officer looked at Will, realising no one else had come forward. “Alright then. Hop in.” Luckily the lifeboat had barely even been lowered, it would be easy enough to carefully jump in the boat from here.

Adam looked at Will. Was he really going to leave Adam here? They only needed a sailor, and Adam wasn't one.

“Is there room for my brother? I won’t leave him.” Will asked, still holding tight to Adam. He knew Adam looked young, and hoped that would help his case.

The officer nodded, then motioned for them to get in the boat. He didn’t have time to argue.

“We’ll find you, I promise.” Hannibal said, Nigel nodding with him. They couldn’t say much more here, not in public and not when Will and Adam needed to hurry up and get on the lifeboat. A short promise would have to do.

Will and Adam nodded, taking one last look at their lovers, before stepping into the lifeboat and sitting as it was lowered.

Relief spread through Will. They were on a lifeboat, so they were at least safe from the immediate danger of the sinking. He had looked after Adam, he had done his job.

Adam sat in the lifeboat, thankful that he’d been allowed to stay with Will. That was one worry off his mind, for now. Lifeboats were good, they were safe. He was safe, with Will. Now they just had to wait, and hope Hannibal and Nigel were okay.

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Hannibal and Nigel stayed on the deck, not entirely sure what to do right now. The ideal thing would be to find a lifeboat, but there were still women and children around, and they refused to take the spot of any of them. They had been raised better than that.

The lifeboats were still being launched, a bit more frantically now as the Titanic started to list.

Nigel turned his head suddenly, hearing something. It sounded almost like a baby crying, amongst the cacophony of people panicking, the crewmen shouting, and the band playing.

He walked towards the sound, Hannibal following him, until he came to a small part of the deck separated by a wooden railing.

The sound was 2 young children crying, scared and confused at what was going on. One was only a baby, the other, a girl, looked about 3 or 4, holding her little brother or sister.

Nigel knelt down, extending a hand. How anyone could leave these children, he didn't know. But, he had no idea how they came to be here, so he put the thought aside. "Come here, let us get you to a lifeboat."

Hannibal knelt next to Nigel, his heart breaking at the thought of the 2 children being left behind. They had to help, even if it was just to put them on a lifeboat, with Nigel and Hannibal themselves staying behind.

The girl looked at them with big eyes, before stepping towards them. Her arms hurt from carrying her little sister, and she handed her off to Nigel, Hannibal picking her up in his arms.

"I'm Hannibal, what's your name?" He asked, putting her on his hip. She reminded him a lot of Mischa.

"Anna." She never took her eyes off her sister, who had stopped crying now she was in Nigel's arms. "My sister is Laura. What's happening?"

Hannibal held her closer as they approached the last few lifeboats being launched. "The lifeboats are being launched, and we'll get you and Laura on one, okay?"

Nigel and Hannibal gently pushed their way through to where the lifeboat was being launched. There was still space in it, thankfully

"We've got 2 kids here, they aren't ours but they need to get on a lifeboat." Nigel said, talking to the crewman who was launching the lifeboat. "We found them in the corner, crying."

There was too much going on, too many people still on board and there was room in the lifeboat. "Get in, look after the kids, go." The crewman said, gesturing for them to hurry up.

Nigel and Hannibal didn't hesitate, they got in the lifeboat with Laura and Anna still in their arms.

As the lifeboat was lowered, Hannibal tried to comfort Anna. "We'll find your family, okay? You'll be okay now."

Hannibal and Nigel looked at each other, as the lifeboat rowed away from the ship. They both knew they had gotten lucky tonight, very lucky. They had gotten away from the worst of it, now they just had to sit here, with Anna and Laura, and wait.

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Everyone in the lifeboats watched as the Titanic went under, hearing the screams of those still on board. It was a sight to behold, as much as they could see in the middle of the ocean in the

dead of night.

The Titanic was gone, leaving the survivors behind.

***

Everybody reunited on board the Carpathia, hugs and tearful kisses being exchanged as they found each other again.

Hannibal, Will, Adam, Nigel, Chiyoh and Beverly, they had all survived, by some miracle.

When they landed in New York, they all disembarked to start their new lives together, as a family. Adam was worried about what that would look like, but after the events of the last few days he knew he didn't want to be without Will or Nigel.

Anna and Laura’s family was found, leading to another tearful reunion, and a slightly sad goodbye with Hannibal and Nigel, who had looked after them on board the Carpathia.

Bedelia and Jack were never found, assumed to have died in the sinking.

Hannibal bought a house in the countryside, big enough for them all to live in together. He counted his blessings every day that he woke up with Will in his bed, making sure to never take it for granted.

Adam adjusted well to their new life, with Nigel by his side. Will had never seen him so happy, had never been so happy himself, with their new family.

Nigel couldn't believe that he got to wake up every day next to Adam, and often found himself just staring as he slept. It had come true, their plan.

They were together, that's all that mattered.

Follow Up 1: Now and Then, I Miss You

Chapter Summary

> Hello! It's been a year since I first posted this story, so to commemorate it, I wrote a short follow up that wouldn't leave my brain.

Adam was back on that floating piece of wood, in the dark night and freezing cold of 15th April, 1912, a night he couldn't escape. The coldness that seeped into his bones was the same, the fear in his heart a familiar feeling.

Holding his hand tightly was Nigel, and as Adam looked at his lover, he knew that he was gone. His lips were blue, his hand freezing cold, his body frozen. He blinked, and for a second, the real memory seeped into the dream, Will in Nigel's place.

Then it was Nigel again, feeling as real as it had on the actual night.

Nigel was gone, despite all their promises to each other to survive this, to disembark in New York City together.

"Nigel, come back. Please." Adam whispered, even as he let go of his hand, watching him sink into the ocean, cold and lifeless. No matter how many times he relived this moment, it hurt the same every time.

Adam knew how this was supposed to go. The lifeboats would come back, Adam would be rescued, and everything would be okay. There were plenty of survivors in the water, the lifeboats had to come back, right? The lifeboats always came back.

Adam looked around, seeing if there were any more survivors, or if the lifeboats had come back yet.

He was alone.

There was no debris, no survivors, no bodies, and no lifeboats. No sign that anything had taken place here, so far from land. There was only Adam, floating alone on the North Atlantic Ocean, with no lifeboats coming to save him.

There would be no rescue this time.

***

Hannibal awoke to the sound of crying, and the gentle rocking of the body in the bed next to him. He turned over, slowly, to face Adam. "Come here, darling." His voice rough from sleep, Hannibal held an arm out, as Adam rolled over to burrow into his side.

“I miss them.” Adam said quietly, tears still rolling down his cheeks.

It had been 2 years since the sinking of the RMS Titanic, 2 years without Will and Nigel, and yet it was still a fresh wound. It would never fully heal.

“I miss them too.” Hannibal hugged Adam tightly, the way he always did on these kinds of nights.

It happened every so often, the nightmares and the sadness. It wasn’t just Adam who needed comfort in the middle of the night, sometimes. Hannibal did too, when he dreamt of the sinking.

It was the main reason they slept in the same bed - they needed the comfort in the middle of the night, the warmth of another body in the bed beside them. More often than not they awoke with Mischa having joined them, seeking comfort from her own nightmares.

“I wish they were still here with us.” Adam said, even as he knew it was an obvious point to make. But he liked hearing Hannibal’s voice, as he sounded almost the same as Nigel had.

On more than one occasion, Adam had woken up in the morning, looked over at the man in bed beside him, and thought for a second that it was Nigel. It was a good second, the idea that Nigel was still here. But then his mind caught up to reality, and he remembered.

The same thing sometimes happened when Adam caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror, his resemblance to Will. More than once, in those early days after the sinking, he had talked to the mirror, because if he didn’t focus on the reflection he could pretend it was Will.

Hannibal kissed the top of Adam’s head, holding him close. “I do as well. But I am grateful that I have you, every day.”

It haunted Hannibal, Adam’s words on the Carpathia. The idea that Hannibal only cared for Will, that he would have abandoned Adam because Will and Nigel were gone.

So, Hannibal made sure to remind Adam, often, of how grateful he was to have him in his life, to ensure he never felt like that again.

And Hannibal truly was grateful for Adam, for all the ways he reminded him of Will, both in their appearance and their mannerisms, but also because of Adam himself. For the joy in Adam’s eyes at Hannibal’s drawings, for how he was with Mischa, for everything Adam was.

“Sometimes I catch a glimpse of myself in a mirror and think it’s Will.” Adam whispered. He’d never admitted it to Hannibal before, feeling slightly ashamed at being tricked by his own reflection.

Hannibal held him tighter, as much for his own sake as for Adam’s. “I’ve done that before.” He had done the same with Adam - sometimes, in the right light, or from far away, Hannibal had mistaken him for Will. For that one second, everything was bright again, and then he remembered Will was gone, and it all came crashing down around him.

It felt like they’d never stop relieving the sinking, never stop losing Will and Nigel.

For a short while, Hannibal and Adam just held on to each other, both of them thinking of Will and Nigel, of the sinking, and of each other. Eventually they fell asleep, holding each other close.

Follow Up 2: Are you ready to go back to Titanic?

Chapter Summary

Hello! I rewatched Titanic again at the weekend and this idea kinda popped into my brain, so enjoy!

1958

Mischa crept through the front door of the Lecter mansion, quietly locking it behind herself afterwards.

She had no reason to sneak around, not really. But she knew that as soon as Hannibal heard her come home he would want to talk to her, and she needed to be alone right now.

She got as far as the library, sitting down on the floor and hugging her knees to herself as she finally let herself cry.

The reason for her tears was simple - she had just been to the movie theatre, to watch A Night To Remember, a film based on a historically accurate book recounting the sinking of the Titanic.

As soon as she had heard about it, she knew she had to see it.

She wanted to understand the sinking, fully.

She had been a child when it happened, and although she could remember clearly the events of the night, it was through the lens of a child.

She hadn't fully understood the chaos, the severity of sinking, hadn't known the full events leading up to it.

In her mind, Adam had been arrested. Then there was a rush to the deck, climbing into a lifeboat with Chiyoh and Beverly and watching from afar as the ship sank.

She had had no idea of the rush for the rest of the lifeboats, the chaos as the ship rose into the air.

She had wanted to see it for herself, as an adult with a greater understanding of the world.

As she had grown up she had sought out as much information about the sinking as possible, eager to know all she could about this event that had defined her childhood. She had asked Hannibal and Adam about that night, wanting to know their experiences, but both did not want to relive that night all over again.

So, she sought out other sources. Read all the books and news articles she could find, wanting to be able to understand it. She knew the technical parts of it, who died, what happened.

But all the books and news articles hadn't prepared her for seeing it on screen.

It brought all of that night back to her, the terror of seeing the ship go down, the noises of the survivors in the water, the chaos and hopelessness that was in the air. It was like she was back there, on the worst night of her life, all over again.

Maybe she shouldn't have gone to see the film.

After a short while, Mischa collected herself. Looking at the clock, she realised it was later than she thought. She felt a little bit better now, the initial shock at seeing it on screen having passed.

Slowly, she stood up, made her way out of the library, stopping at the large family portrait which hung pride of place in the hall.

Her eyes lingered on Nigel, and then on Will, willing herself not to cry. "I miss you."

With one last look, she walked up the stairs, into her own room, quickly changing into her nightclothes.

She snuck into Hannibal and Adam's room, climbing between them, needing to be with her family for now.

She hoped it would keep the inevitable nightmares at bay.

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